

**POSTDOCTORAL RESIDENCY IN CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY
VA St. Louis Health Care System
St. Louis, Missouri
2023 - 2024**



[Psychology Training Programs | VA St Louis Health Care | Veterans Affairs](#)

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***Expected Start Date: July 17, 2023**
***may be negotiable depending on individual circumstances**

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FOREWARD

Thank you for your interest in our psychology training program at the VA St. Louis Health Care System! The VA St. Louis Health Care System has offered psychology training since the late 1950's. Our psychology training program earned accreditation by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1980 and has grown through the years to our current structure of 4 general residency positions and 2 neuropsychology track positions. We began our postdoctoral training programs in 2008 and became accredited by the APA in March 2013 (next review will be 2032). In our traditional 1-year programs, residents train within the emphasis areas of **Geropsychology, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Health Psychology, and Evidence Based Psychotherapy and Assessment (EBP)**. In our 2-year specialization in **Clinical Neuropsychology**, one Neuropsychology position is awarded each year.

The traditional clinical psychology positions (Geropsychology, PTSD, EBP and Health Psychology) are designed to emphasize advanced, evidence-based clinical training in frontier areas of psychology service delivery while our clinical neuropsychology residency is designed to meet specific specialization standards.

We know you are carefully scouring the details of specific programs you have identified as matching your training interests. We also understand the importance of seeking placements that will offer the best personal and professional returns for the investment of your time and resources. As you sort through all these details, **we would like to offer a few highlights of what you can expect from our postdoctoral residency programs.**

- You can expect mentoring and supervision from incredibly talented and skilled practitioners who are enthusiastically committed to your training and growth.
- You can expect a training structure that equally supports and challenges your progressive development over the course of residency.
- You can expect to find a training environment that equally recognizes and values the contributions our residents bring to us in the form of diverse and informed perspectives.

There are often expanding and emerging training opportunities at our VA. This brochure represents the information and opportunities that are anticipated. **It is likely that there may be changes, particularly related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.** In keeping with APPIC recommendations, the safety of our trainees, supervisors, veterans, and community is of utmost importance. We strive to make the recruitment and selection process as accessible and fair as possible during these times, and we rely on an ethical framework for decision making to guard against bias and lapses. We pledge to use science, evidence-based findings, and the recommendations of public health experts to inform our process and recommended procedures. For more information about changes to our program due to the pandemic, please see information contained in Attachment 2.

For the training year 2023-2024, our targeted start date will be **July 17, 2023**. Our program may accommodate later start dates for those applicants still finishing their internship at the time of our targeted start date.

If you have questions about our program that are not addressed by this brochure please contact the Training Director, Lauren Mensie, Ph.D. by e-mail at Lauren.Mensie2@va.gov or by phone at (314) 652-4100 x64625.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lauren Mensie & St. Louis Psychology Training Council

Questions regarding program status should be directed to:

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PSYCHOLOGY WITHIN THE VA ST. LOUIS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

The VA St. Louis Health Care System (VASTLHCS) is part of VISN 15, The Heartland VISN. The VASTLHCS is a two-division medical center with the majority of medical specializations being housed at the John Cochran (JC) division and the majority of the mental health/rehabilitation services being housed at the Jefferson Barracks (JB) division. The Hope Recovery Center, located in midtown St. Louis, houses programming and services related to homelessness. VASTLHCS provides comprehensive mental health care, including inpatient, residential, outpatient, integrated services (e.g., MH services integrated into Primary Care, Spinal Cord Injury, Community Living Center, and Pain Rehabilitation Programs), and community-based services to an average of more than 14,000 Veterans and greater than 142,200 visits a year. Psychologists are members of Medical Staff of the VASTLHCS, which allows them to serve on various facility-level leadership and steering committees. The Residency program remains under the administrative oversight of the Psychology Training Council and Training Director.

In accordance with the overall mission of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), psychology training (as well as other associated health and medical programs) is to be conducted within an integrated service delivery model. Training is designed not only to improve the health of our Veterans but also to ensure an active and competent workforce of health professionals able to support the Department of Defense (DoD) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in times of local or regional disaster.

Psychologists at the VA St. Louis Health Care System engage in a wide variety of clinical, teaching, and administrative activities and have considerable autonomy in their professional endeavors. The number of psychologists and the diverse areas in which we practice have undergone a rapid expansion in the last ten years. We have approximately 50 doctoral level psychologists on site operating in a variety of areas within mental health and integrated into medical clinics. The doctoral supervisory staff is highly qualified and experienced, and all are licensed as psychologists. Various staff members have part-time private practices, are affiliated with local universities/medical schools, conduct research, and are active in community and national professional organizations. Some of our psychologists are engaged in research activities, and when their areas of research align with residency placements, this can afford another opportunity for psychology residents.

PSYCHOLOGY TRAINING

Our program has run continuously since its inception with the full support of VA administration and leadership. We receive VA funding to host 6 psychology interns and 6 psychology residents. We also regularly offer unpaid practica rotations to students from APA-accredited psychology graduate programs with which we hold affiliation agreements.

We have 6 funded resident positions. Each residency position is designed as a full-time (40 hours/wk), 12 month (2080 hour) training experience with the exception of the Neuropsychology residencies which are 2 year appointments, with the proviso that the second year appointment is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the first year. The two year residency schedule is designed to form the basis for pursuing board certification for Neuropsychology. Residents are expected to complete the entire training commitment in their area of specialty training.

Psychology residents within each of the emphasis areas begin their training year by collaborating with their primary supervisors to identify specific clinical areas for growth and to set personal goals for training, resulting in the collaborative development of a learning agreement which guides the resident's training experiences. These documents explicate training objectives, experiences, and expectations for training fidelity while also meeting the State of Missouri's licensure requirements for post-degree resident supervision. A review of license activity from our residency classes since 2008 shows they each have obtained licensure at the earliest date at which they were eligible. A review of our staff biographical vignettes at the conclusion of this brochure reveals we have a large number of staff who trained within this very VA! We believe this reflects the rigor and excellence of our training curriculum, the rewarding nature of the professional psychology careers within our health care system, and the collegiality of the psychologists serving together at our VA.

To maintain quality and fidelity to excellence in training, our program routinely collects training data through comprehensive quarterly training evaluations, supervisor evaluations, and post-graduation evaluations measuring how well elements of the training environment help residents develop necessary clinical and professional competencies. We host 2 town hall meetings with all trainees and supervisors over the course of the year in our Psychology Service Meetings and each spring we offer an anonymous survey designed to elicit honest feedback and recommendations regarding all elements of our training program. This structure allows for information sharing and collaborative problem solving in real-time, as opposed to a process of delayed solicitation and delayed action. This information is used in the Training Council's annual strategic planning session to continue quality improvements. We believe it is because of these procedures that our formal program outcome data has consistently reflected positive evaluations from our interns and residents.

THE PSYCHOLOGY RESIDENCY PROGRAM

A. TRAINING PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM AIMS: The VA St. Louis Health Care System psychology training program structures itself based upon a scholar-practitioner model with a specific focus on the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for success in a complex health care system. Our instructional approach is developmental. We believe in meeting trainees "where they are" and then facilitating the development of their competencies over the course of their training program such that they achieve –or exceed- the minimal levels of expected achievement by the completion of their training program. This approach is used by necessity during internship year, but proves equally

effective during residency, where foundational skills are honed through graduated clinical experiences designed to culminate with the resident functioning as close as possible to the level of competency that would be required as an independent practitioner.

The program utilizes a variety of learning methods to assist trainees in achieving competence in these domains including, individual supervision, didactics, experiential trainings, participation in team meetings, and modeling from psychologists and other staff. Additionally, our training programs provide opportunities to practice and demonstrate achievement of the following profession-wide competencies over the course of their training experiences:

1. Research
2. Ethical and legal standards
3. Individual and cultural diversity
4. Professional values, attitudes, and behaviors
5. Communication and interpersonal skills
6. Assessment
7. Intervention
8. Supervision
9. Consultation and interprofessional/interdisciplinary skills

We believe emphasis upon these competencies facilitates residents from our program becoming skilled, well-rounded, ethical, licensure-ready clinicians capable of the independent practice of psychology and able to meet licensure in the State of Missouri as outlined in the Missouri State Committee of Psychologists Practice Act and Rules available at www.pr.mo.gov/psychologists.asp.

Residency Structure

The VA St. Louis Health Care System psychology residency program follows a multiple practice format as defined by APA's Policy Statements and Implementing Regulations. The residency is organized into two separate areas:

1. Substantive traditional practice area of Clinical Psychology, with four areas of emphasis:
 - Geropsychology
 - Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Health Psychology
 - Evidence Based Psychotherapy and Assessment (EBP)
2. Specialty practice area of Clinical Neuropsychology (two-year program)

1. Traditional Clinical Psychology Aims

Our primary aims for the clinical psychology residency are:

- To prepare residents to function as independent practitioners through the development of advanced skills in the program's identified profession wide competencies.

- To prepare residents with a breadth and depth of practical experiences within their emphasis areas such that they can leave residency with sufficient readiness to promote specific techniques for clinical assessment, intervention, consultation, supervision, and scholarly inquiry to make professional contributions in whatever setting they are employed.

To demonstrate the minimum-level of achievement (MLA) necessary for program completion, Clinical Psychology Residents must achieve a rating of 2 or greater on the Overall Assessment of Trainee's Current Level of Competence on the Trainee Evaluation Form, which reflects Profession-Wide Competencies as detailed in the APA Standards of Accreditation for Health Service Psychology. Anchors for that form are as follows:

- 1 – Needs Improvement, Below Minimum Level of Achievement
- 2 – Meets Minimum Level of Achievement
- 3 – Meets Developmental Level of Achievement
- 4 – Exceeds Developmental Level of Achievement

2. Specialty Clinical Neuropsychology Aims

Our specialty residency in clinical neuropsychology is a member of the Association of Postdoctoral Programs in Clinical Neuropsychology (APPCN) and adheres to Houston Conference Guidelines. The general programmatic guidelines as outlined in the Houston Conference Guidelines are met by our two-year full-time residency program as follows:

- The Neuropsychology Residency Training Director is a board-certified clinical neuropsychologist.
- Training experiences occur with direct affiliation to the host VA facility and with proximal training occurring with on-site clinical supervision.
- There is access to clinical services and training programs in medical specialties and allied professions (e.g., the resident has regular interactions with a broad range of health care professionals including medical providers in primary care, neurology, neuropathology, physiatry, psychiatry, as well as other psychologists and other psychology residents [including the second resident in neuropsychology], and interns, nurse practitioners, nursing, physician assistants, and a range of allied professions [e.g., occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, vocational rehabilitation specialists]).
- There are interactions with residents in medical specialties and allied professions (the resident interacts with other psychology residents [including the other resident in neuropsychology as well as residents in pediatric neuropsychology at Wash U./St. Louis Children's Hospital]; interacts with medical residents and allied professions through the Polytrauma/TBI Clinic, in context of Neuropsychology Clinic, and in context of external didactics at neurology and neuropathology at Washington University in St. Louis).
- Each resident spends significant percentages of time in clinical service, and clinical research, and educational activities, appropriate to the individual resident's training needs for the Neuropsychology Specialty Residency Program.

The overall aims for our clinical neuropsychology residency are:

- To prepare residents for independent practice in clinical neuropsychology through the development of advanced understanding of brain-behavior relationships as well as advanced skills in neuropsychological evaluation, treatment, scholarly activity, and consultation to patients and relevant medical/behavioral professionals.
- To provide appropriate foundational and specialty training such that residents are prepared for independent practice in clinical neuropsychology as evidenced by eligibility for state licensure for the independent practice of psychology and by eligibility for board certification in clinical neuropsychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology following completion of residency.

To demonstrate the minimum-level of achievement (MLA) necessary for program completion, the Neuropsychology Resident must achieve a rating of 2 or greater on the Overall Assessment of Trainee's Current Level of Competence on the Neuropsychology Resident Evaluation Form, which directly corresponds with the Competencies and Elements put forth by the Clinical Neuropsychology Synarchy (Smith et al., 2019).

Anchors for that form are as follows:

- 1 – Needs Improvement, Below Minimum Level of Achievement
- 2 – Meets Minimum Level of Achievement
- 3 – Meets Developmental Level of Achievement
- 4 – Exceeds Developmental Level of Achievement

B. AREAS OF CLINICAL TRAINING:

1. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (1 FTEE position)

The PTSD residency provides a one-year intensive training experience in clinical psychology with an emphasis on diagnosis, treatment, and consultation with a PTSD patient population.

Clinical Service Overview: The Trauma Recovery Program (TRP) is a specialized service within the larger Continuum of Care in the Mental Health Service Line. Our mission is to help Veterans recover from the effects of trauma and to improve their quality of life. The TRP includes psychiatrists, psychologists, clinical social workers, nurses, interns, residents, and administrative staff. Assessment and individualized treatment planning, to include episodes of care, shared decision-making, and measurement-based care, are the cornerstones of our work. Our program strongly emphasizes evidence-based psychotherapy for PTSD as a first-line treatment. Of note, several TRP staff psychologists trained with Dr. Resick at the Center for Trauma Recovery, the birthplace of Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT). Most services in the TRP are delivered in individual psychotherapy format. However, our program offers a range of treatment options, to include long-term process groups. As part of the larger Continuum of Care, the TRP works closely with adjacent resources, including Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI), the Level 2 Polytrauma/TBI Clinic, Inpatient Mental Health, the Women's Clinic, Veteran's Justice Outreach, and multiple internal

and external liaison services/resources dedicated to triaging the care needs for Veterans. For trainees interested in policy and leadership, one of our team members is the Specialty Mental Health Programs Manager for the facility and the PTSD Mentor for Veteran's Integrated Service Network 15, which coordinates with national leadership on policy and best practices dissemination to the field.

Resident Experiences: Residents will participate in a training program of approximately 70% clinical service, 10% research/performance improvement/program evaluation, 10% inter-professional treatment team meetings/consultation, 10% didactics/professional development with some flexibility dependent upon individual areas of interest. Breadth of training will promote advanced skills in diagnosis and case conceptualization, with an emphasis on evidenced-based intervention, inter-professional treatment team functioning, and a project outlined below. Depth of training will emphasize advanced skill acquisition and expertise in the treatment of PTSD and trauma-related disorders.

The resident will be involved in every stage of service provision including opportunities in triage, consultation and liaison, assessment (both diagnostic interview and psychometric assessment), differential diagnosis, treatment planning, psychotherapeutic intervention, multidisciplinary Trauma Recovery Program meetings, and Veteran outreach and education, as appropriate. Interaction with adjacent clinics and professional disciplines will be an integral part of training. The clinical service portion of training will emphasize acquisition of evidenced-based intervention skills, with an emphasis on Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) and Prolonged Exposure (PE). Additional opportunities to learn or be exposed to Adaptive Disclosure, Cognitive Behavioral Conjoint Therapy for PTSD, Skills Training for Affective and Interpersonal Regulation, and Narrative Exposure Therapy may be available as well.

We expect that residents will play an active role in performance improvement/quality management in their training area in the form of a scholarly project for the year. This project will be identified in the first month of training in a collaborative fashion with the resident's primary supervisor and related staff, and progress will be monitored by the resident's supervisors. Possible projects will involve program development, outcome measure design and/or implementation, fidelity measures, or performance improvement enhancements to existing programs. In order to facilitate a comprehensive knowledge base of trauma theory and interventions, residents may also make use of medical library, VA online educational programs, and special local or regional training, if available. This may include the opportunity to complete VA rollout for CPT (subject to availability). They will also participate in scheduled didactic and enrichment seminars to provide an additional breadth of learning with respect to the broader traditions of clinical psychology.

Facilities and Staff Support: The Trauma Recovery Program is housed in its own dedicated location on Jefferson Barracks campus, which includes a dedicated trainee office with computer access and unit scheduling support.

2. Geropsychology (1 FTEE position)

The Geropsychology residency is designed with the goal of preparing residents for independent practice in a Geropsychology setting and with sufficient training experiences to support a goal of pursuing board certification in the specialty area of Geropsychology through the American Board of Professional Psychology, if they so choose. The resident can expect to develop skills necessary to offer consultation, assessment, and evidence-based treatment to older adults across a breadth of treatment settings. Possible treatment settings include inpatient, outpatient, video-telehealth, and in-home options. Currently, VA St. Louis Health Care System is a member of the Council of Professional Geropsychology Training Programs.

Clinical Services: The Clinical Geropsychology resident will have opportunities to provide services as a member of multiple interprofessional teams, including treatment teams providing care in the Community Living Center (CLC, primarily a short-term medical rehabilitation setting), Mental Health - Aging Resources Team (MH-ART, an outpatient mental health clinic for older adults), inpatient Palliative Care consultation, outpatient Palliative Care, Home-Based Primary Care, the ComPACT team (an integrated primary care team for medically complex patients), and the Interdisciplinary Dementia Evaluation Team in GeriPACT. Interdisciplinary teams may include nurses, physicians, chaplains, physical therapists, occupational therapists, recreational therapists, speech-language pathologists, social workers, dietitians, and pharmacists. Services provided may include, but are not limited to, the following: evidence-based individual, group, and family psychotherapy, environmental/behavioral modification, caregiver support, cognitive assessment, capacity evaluation, pain management services, and interdisciplinary consultation. Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the availability of in-person clinical opportunities may vary based upon guidance from training accrediting and overseeing bodies and facility operational status. When in-person opportunities are not available, video or telephone telehealth visits will be utilized where possible.

The resident may also be given the opportunity to gain exposure to other areas such as Inpatient Geropsychiatry, Spinal Cord Injury, and Primary Care Mental Health Integration (brief assessments and interventions for older adults within a broader primary care setting). Training will occur at the Jefferson Barracks and John Cochran campuses in Saint Louis, with the possibility of telehealth work as well. In addition to providing clinical services, the resident will complete a scholarly activity with a special focus on Geropsychology. Trainees will have the opportunity to participate in the psychology residency didactic series, as well as the Geropsychology journal club, and other specialty didactics and training opportunities. The resident may also have opportunities to provide vertical supervision and present/teach during grand rounds and staff trainings.

3. Health Psychology (1 FTEE position)

The Health Psychology residency position provides comprehensive training in health psychology across a broad range of behavioral health settings to prepare the resident to

engage in a health psychology practice upon completion of the residency. This training experience includes clinical assessment and intervention, collaboration within interdisciplinary teams and with specialty care providers, exposure to ethical, legal, and professional issues, didactic learning opportunities in health policy and healthcare systems, and the biopsychosocial and cultural aspects of behavioral health practice. Working at the largest health care system in the nation provides the resident opportunities to explore the complexity of health care disparities and to further develop and evaluate culturally competent health care delivery.

The resident will be responsible for using evidenced-based behavioral health interventions for more typical mental health presentations as well as those with medical problems that have significant behavioral health components (e.g., ACT, CBT-D, CBT-I, CBT-CP, CBT-SUD, Brief PE, PST, MI, etc). Training opportunities may be available in a variety of health psychology domains. A minimum of one rotation within Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) is required. Additional training experiences in health psychology will be selected in collaboration with the resident's preceptor to best align with the resident's specific training interests.

Required Rotation:

The selected resident will rotate in a minimum of one of several available primary care sites in Primary Care Mental Health Integration. PCMHI is a short-term, problem-focused, consultative treatment model in which psychologists and trainees are fully integrated into various primary care teams. Within the primary care setting, residents will learn to deliver fast-paced service in response to warm-handoffs from primary care providers or other members of the patient aligned care teams (PACT) for a general evaluation or determination of level of care needed following positive screens for PTSD, depression, anxiety, suicide and substance use conditions, as well as concerns regarding cognitive functioning. The Health Psychology resident will learn to appropriately adapt evidence-based treatments to the brief primary care model of intervention in addition to increasing competence in brief health psychology interventions for a wide variety of problems, including improving adherence to medical regimens, managing chronic conditions, and helping change lifestyle issues or health risk factors among patients. Opportunities for group interventions, such as participating in shared medical appointments (interventions delivered with the PACT team, targeted to groups of patients who share the same medical condition) or group psychotherapy interventions (e.g., CBT-I, CBT-CP) is dependent on specific primary care clinics. The various primary care sites available to the selected resident will offer exposure to diversity in all elements of the ADDRESSING model with noted differences in socioeconomic status, race, gender, ethnicity, and age between each of the locations. The resident will learn, first hand, the ways in which these variables have disparate effects on health and functioning for Veterans and how to adapt established treatments to account for these differences.

Additional Experiences may include (subject to availability):

- 1) Siteman Cancer Center (at Barnes-Jewish Hospital/Washington University School of Medicine): Siteman Cancer Center is a non-VA educational detail. This center is a national leader in patient care, cancer research, prevention, education and community outreach and a National Cancer Institute designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. Psychology trainees function as a member of the service, assuming responsibilities that are appropriate level given the student's abilities and experience. On this rotation, the resident will provide clinical services (brief assessment, psychoeducation, and individual or group psychotherapy) for patients and families receiving care at the Siteman Cancer Center. Common treatment issues include management of physical symptoms or treatment side effects (e.g. pain, nausea, fatigue), adjustment disorders, depression, anxiety, caregiving concerns, and end-of-life issues. Services are offered both in the outpatient therapy setting and inpatient hospital setting. This rotation also allows for the experience of consulting with other providers of medical and psychosocial services for patients, including oncologists, psychiatrists, social workers, spiritual care providers, nursing staff and nutritionists. ***Please note that this may be an option for the 2023-2024 training year, with OAA approval.**
- 2) Spinal Cord Injury (SCI): This unit is one of only 23 specialized centers in the entire VA system. It is staffed with 2 FTEE clinical psychologists. Psychology staff perform problem-focused assessments and counseling to promote readjustment and increased coping skills of individuals with various degrees of functional deficits. Training occurs on the inpatient rehabilitation unit as well as in the PACT outpatient clinic. The resident will work within the context of a long-established interdisciplinary team, and all treatment plans are integrated across disciplines. Case management, psychoeducational interventions, and family work are all possible experiences in this area.
- 3) Home Based Primary Care (HBPC): HBPC is a program that provides comprehensive, longitudinal, primary care in the homes of Veterans with complex, chronic, disabling disease. The care is delivered by an interdisciplinary team comprised of primary care provider, nursing, social work, physical and occupational therapy, dietitians, pharmacy, and psychology. Psychology responsibilities include assessments of psychological and cognitive functioning, assessments of capacity for decision-making, psychotherapeutic interventions with patients and family members, interdisciplinary team consultation, and staff education. Presenting problems are varied and include depression and anxiety, adjustment to chronic illness and cognitive changes, caregiver stress, behavioral issues in neurocognitive disorders, PTSD, pain management, sleep disorders, and alcohol and substance use.
- 4) Medical/Surgical Assessments: As part of their training, the resident will also be expected to learn more extensive formal health assessments, such as transplant evaluations, bariatric surgery evaluations, and spinal cord stimulator evaluations.
- 5) Finally, the following adjunctive training opportunities may also be available to the Health Psychology resident, including:
 - a. ComPACT clinic: an interdisciplinary intensive primary care team for medically complex patients. Clinical opportunities involve assessment,

individual and family psychotherapeutic interventions, health behavior interventions, cognitive screening, and consultation to medical providers.

- b. The Health Promotion & Disease Prevention (HPDP) Program aims to improve veterans' health by managing chronic disease states, including weight, nicotine dependence, and type 2 diabetes. The HPDP psychologist also completes psychosocial assessments prior to solid organ transplant or bariatric surgery. Therefore, within the HPDP adjunct rotation, the following experiences/interventions are available: 1) complete psychosocial assessments for transplant and/or bariatric surgery candidates, 2) shadow, co-lead, and eventually independently lead Smoking Cessation Group, and/or 3) shadow, co-lead, and eventually independently lead MOVE! Weight Loss Group.
- c. Whole Health: The St. Louis VA is proud to be one of the flagship and most robust Whole Health programs in the VA. Clinical opportunities may include Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction group and biofeedback.

Across all training opportunities, the Health Psychology resident will work in interdisciplinary care settings, learning to evaluate presenting health concerns and coordinate care as part of a treatment team. Residents can be expected to learn about social determinants of health that interact with patient presentations and treatment settings. There will be opportunities for working with a diverse range of patient populations in a variety of landscapes (e.g., urban, suburban, rural). It is expected that residents will work with their supervisors and interdisciplinary team members to develop treatment plans that consider patient's individual cultural backgrounds and unique health needs (e.g., health literacy considerations, accommodations to healthcare to improve access to care) to foster cultural competency across rotations. This requires a comprehensive analysis utilizing the biopsychosocial model, with the administration of empirically supported assessment tools appropriate to the veteran's illness, injury, or disability, to guide development of an appropriate treatment/rehabilitation plan. To further prepare the resident to transition to an independent licensed psychologist, the resident is expected to function as a member of the various interdisciplinary care teams for their rotations, as demonstrated by attending team meetings, interdisciplinary staff didactics, and informal and formal team huddles throughout the day. In addition, the resident will be asked to present a topic at PCMHI research day and at a journal club of their choosing. Supervisors will look for opportunities to provide the resident with vertical supervision of an intern or practicum student, whose clinical interests most closely match the resident's developing expertise (may occur via telehealth modalities). Though not mandatory, the resident is encouraged to join other psychology councils/committees aligned with their professional interests. If interested, the primary care resident will have the opportunity to complete Phase 1 competency training and participate in VISN Community of Practice calls, a recent national standard of practice for PCMHI psychologists. Residents are also allotted a portion of time to participate in scholarly activities, which may include joining research studies already in progress or developing specific programs for implementation within one of their training rotations.

4. Evidence Based Psychotherapy and Assessment (1 FTEE Position)

The Evidence Based Practice (EBP) Psychotherapy and Assessment position is located primarily within our Jefferson Barracks campus Behavioral Health Interdisciplinary Program (BHIP). This program provides a one-year advanced training experience in evidence based psychotherapy services for both groups and individuals, as well as targeted Clinical Interview and assessment to assist in treatment recommendations for a wide range of diagnostic presentations. Residents work closely with a multidisciplinary team of social workers, nurses, and psychiatrists. The resident participates in a broad range of training experiences including diagnosis, assessment, and intervention, as well as in depth instruction in a variety of evidence-based therapies adapted for group interventions and use in individual treatment.

Clinical Services: The EBP Psychotherapy and Assessment resident is considered part of the psychology team, engaging in assessment, providing individual psychotherapy services using EBP approaches, developing and co-facilitating group interventions, and referring to additional VA services when needed. Residents work within a multidisciplinary environment of psychiatric providers, nurses, and social workers. They participate in case staffing meetings, psychotherapy consultation meetings, monthly BHIP staff meetings, and provide ongoing consultation with various members of Veteran's care teams. The emphasis in this clinic is strongly focused on measurement-based care and in utilizing a broad array of evidence based interventions with appropriate adaptations meeting the needs of a culturally diverse population and a wide variety of clinical presentations. Residents can expect to learn advanced skills in the use of such therapies as ACT, MI, CBT, CPT, PE, STAIR, and IPT. Residents will also engage in assessment, with opportunities in using objective measures and targeted Clinical Interviewing, to assist in diagnostic clarification and treatment recommendations. The resident will also have an opportunity to interact with providers from the wider VA St. Louis community by attending monthly meetings including the monthly Psychology staff meetings, and monthly Psychology Grand Rounds seminars. Additional opportunities in the John Cochran division Mental Health Clinic (located near downtown St. Louis) as well as other clinics throughout the medical center may also be available.

In addition to providing clinical services, residents will conduct a scholarly project over the course of the training year. This project will be presented during Psychology Grand Rounds. Residents also have the opportunity to participate in psychology councils (Practice Council, Cultural Competency Council) or VA-wide committees of interest.

Our psychology staff and supervisors are passionate about the work they do and enthusiastically committed to developing the next generation of psychologists.

5. Clinical Neuropsychology (1 FTEE Position, 2 Year Program*)

The Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency program provides a two year training program in accordance with the recommendations of the Houston Conference on Specialty Education and Training in Clinical Neuropsychology. The Residency program

provides necessary training and preparation for residents to be eligible for ABPP Board Certification in Clinical Neuropsychology and to practice as specialty-trained clinical neuropsychologists. The program is APA-accredited as a specialty practice postdoctoral residency program in clinical neuropsychology. The program is a member of the Association of Postdoctoral Programs in Clinical Neuropsychology (APPCN). Residents will participate in training in both a comprehensive outpatient neuropsychological evaluation clinic and in outpatient and inpatient neurorehabilitation settings. The VA St. Louis Health Care System has funding for two Neuropsychology Residents. This results in one training position opening for each training year.

The overall goal of the VA St. Louis Health Care System Postdoctoral Program in Clinical Neuropsychology is designed to help residents meet multiple competencies of professional practice and to secure a sense of professional identity such that they become well-rounded, ethical, licensure-ready clinicians with advanced specialty neuropsychology competencies capable of the independent practice of psychology. This goal is accomplished via a scholar-practitioner training model which informs the programmatic structure and the training activities that are included.

Accordingly, the structure of the program during Year One is designed to meet licensure requirements as set forth by the State Committee of Psychologists Practice Act and Rules (State of Missouri). The remainder of the training (Year Two), is designed to complete the training necessary to meet eligibility for ABPP Board Certification in Clinical Neuropsychology, most notably through fulfilling Houston Conference training requirements. As previously stated, as a specialty neuropsychology residency program within a broader integrated residency program at VA St. Louis Health Care System, while there are some shared goals (e.g., eligibility for licensure as a psychologist), our primary goals are consistent with Houston Conference Guidelines and, specifically, the Houston Conference Guidelines Exit Criteria define the training goals for the two year program.

The general programmatic guidelines as outlined in the Houston Conference Guidelines are met by our two year full time residency program as follows:

1. **The faculty is comprised of a board-certified clinical neuropsychologist and other professional psychologists.** The Neuropsychology Residency Training Director, Dr. Hogg, is Board Certified in Clinical Neuropsychology through ABPP. Dr. Kelsey Wilson is working towards Board Certification in Clinical Neuropsychology through ABPP.
2. **Training is provided at a fixed site or on formally affiliated and geographically proximate training sites, with primarily on-site supervision** Training occurs at VA St. Louis Health Care System and affiliation agreements are in place with Washington University School of Medicine, the site of current external didactics.

3. **There is access to clinical services and training programs in medical specialties and allied professions** VA St. Louis Health Care System is a broad multidisciplinary medical center with a range of health care training programs. The resident has regular interactions with a broad range of health care professionals including medical providers in primary care, neurology, neuropathology, psychiatry, as well as other psychologists and other psychology residents and interns, nurse practitioners, nursing, physician assistants, and a range of allied professions – e.g., occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, vocational rehabilitation specialists.

4. **There are interactions with other residents in medical specialties and allied professions** The resident interacts with other members of their residency class [including the other Neuropsychology Resident]; interacts with medical residents and allied professions through the Polytrauma/TBI Clinic, in context of Neuropsychology Clinic, and in context of external didactics at neurology and neuropathology at Washington University in St. Louis.

5. **Each resident spends significant percentages of time in clinical service, and clinical research, and educational activities, appropriate to the individual resident's training needs for the Neuropsychology Specialty Residency Program.**

The following is a review of the Houston Conference based residency training goals as outlined in the Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency Learning Agreements with reference to training program activities which accomplish those goals:

1. **Advanced skill in the neuropsychological evaluation, treatment and consultation to patients and professionals sufficient to practice on an independent basis.** Residents develop advanced skills in these areas through two neuropsychology rotations (neuropsychology clinic and neurorehabilitation). Formal didactics occurring throughout the two-year training period focus both on laying the foundations for a neuropsychological knowledge base, as well as exposing the resident to the latest in scientific advances in our field.

2. **Advanced understanding of brain-behavior relationships.** Residents obtain an advanced understanding of brain-behavior relationships through clinical neuropsychology rotations that include training and supervision of neuropsychological evaluations and neurorehabilitation treatment. Residents also participate in a two year didactic sequence which further develops an advanced understanding of brain-behavior relationships, including the Neuropsychology Neuroanatomy and Neuropathology Seminar, Neuropsychology Case Conference, Neuropsychology Journal Club, as well as regular attendance at Washington University Neuropathology / Brain Cuttings Case Conference, and Neurology Grand Rounds, and attending various Medical Neuroscience didactics via the Washington University School of Medicine Gateway Curriculum during Year Two as a capstone didactic experience.

3. **Scholarly activity, e.g., submission of a study or literature review for publication, presentation, submission of a grant proposal or outcome assessment.** Residents are required to participate in scholarly activity, whether that be preparation of a scholarly paper or literature review, participation in a faculty guided ongoing research, or development of an independent, mentored project. Residents' scholarly activity receives mentorship from core neuropsychology faculty with additional input as needed from adjunct faculty, in line with the residents' scholarly activity focus. We will be providing scholarly activity opportunities congruent with Houston Conference training guidelines including support in conducting literature reviews or an original study of neuropsychological relevance. Dependent upon individual interests, residents can participate in VA sponsored research investigator training, and have access to ongoing applied research in the form of program evaluation efforts. Residents can also participate in VA sponsored Program Improvement training.

4. **A formal evaluation of competency in the exit criteria 1 through 3 shall occur in the residency program.** Formal evaluations at 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, and 24 months assess whether residents are successfully progressing towards meeting the exit criteria per the respective Year One and Year Two Learning Agreements. If a resident does not progress according to the minimum level of achievement required, a remediation plan is established with the goal of assisting the resident to successfully achieve all required competencies.

5. **Eligibility for state or provincial licensure or certification for the independent practice of psychology.** Upon completion of the program, typically by the end of Year One, residents are eligible for licensure to independently practice psychology in the state of Missouri.

6. **Eligibility for board certification in clinical neuropsychology by the American Board of Professional Psychology.** Residents are also eligible for American Board of Professional Psychology specialty certification in clinical neuropsychology upon successful completion of the two year training program.

In summation, the overarching training goal of the VA St. Louis Health Care System Neuropsychology Postdoctoral Residency Program is to produce highly trained, scientifically knowledgeable, clinically skilled independent practitioners who will be competent to work as advanced clinical neuropsychologists.

Clinical Service: VA St. Louis Health Care System Neuropsychology Clinic (located at Jefferson Barracks Division), is staffed with one full-time Neuropsychologist and a second Neuropsychologist who is dedicated to the clinic half-time. The Veteran population covers a diverse age range, ethnic diversity (predominantly White/European American and Black/African American), residential diversity (urban, suburban, and rural), and includes a significant female Veteran referral base. While a broad spectrum of clinics refer Veterans for neuropsychological evaluation services, the predominant referral sources include Neurology, Mental Health/Psychiatry, and Primary Care (which also includes specialized primary care teams for medically complex Veterans and

female Veterans). Presenting conditions include cerebrovascular accidents, dementias, complex medical co-morbidities, major psychopathology, multiple sclerosis, seizure disorder, and substance use disorders, as well as a variety of other medical conditions.

VA St. Louis Health Care System also has a Polytrauma Level II Network Site with one full-time position assigned polytrauma psychologist/neuropsychologist. Polytrauma patients are individuals, mainly from the OEF/OIF conflicts, who have sustained multiple injuries (such as TBI, PTSD, amputation, visual and auditory impairments, etc.), but sometimes individuals are seen after non-military TBI from falls, car accidents, etc.. Neuropsychological evaluation plays an important role in the team's interdisciplinary assessment and planning. The resident will serve as part of an interdisciplinary team and have opportunities to attend weekly interdisciplinary team meetings.

Additional training opportunities include consultation to our Community Living Center (CLC), which has several units including Medical Rehabilitation, Geriatric Evaluation and Management (GEM), and Palliative and Hospice Care. These clinical experiences may include brief cognitive evaluations or capacity evaluations regarding medical decision-making (e.g., for discharge planning).

Residents will also receive specific training and experience in clinical supervision, including documentation and supervision approaches in clinical neuropsychology.

Methodology: Residents will participate in a training program of approximately 80% clinical service, 10% didactics/structured readings/professional development, 10% scholarly activity/research.

Clinical Training: Residents will train in neuropsychological evaluation and consultation. Training emphasizes diagnostic issues, clinical data integration, and functional recommendations. Neuropsychological assessment and recommendations are tied to evidence-based approaches. Empirical neuropsychological literature forms the basis of evaluation approaches and recommendations. Residents will develop strong familiarity with empirical neuropsychological literature and will learn how to update their practice as new substantive findings are published and as empirically superior assessment instruments become available. Between the two training rotations residents will provide comprehensive outpatient neuropsychological evaluations as well as provide inpatient and outpatient evaluations and treatment with Veterans with neurorehabilitation needs. The resident will serve as part of a multidisciplinary team and have opportunities to attend team meetings.

Training occurs in a two 6-month rotation format:

- 1. Outpatient Neuropsychology Clinic rotation with Dr. Hogg**
 - Outpatient neuropsychological evaluations of Veterans from a wide range of referral sources
- 2. Neurorehabilitation rotation (Polytrauma/TBI Clinic and CLC) with Dr. Wilson**

- Polytrauma/TBI Clinic:
 - Direct involvement with interdisciplinary team (e.g., regularly attend interdisciplinary team meetings)
 - Outpatient neuropsychological evaluations of Veterans served in Polytrauma/TBI clinic
 - Facilitation of cognitive rehabilitation groups (CogFACTS and Brain Boosters)
 - Provision of psychotherapy to Veterans with TBI
 - Other Polytrauma/TBI experiences as appropriate on an as available and feasible basis (e.g., if Polytrauma/TBI has an inpatient admission, aiding with brief cognitive assessments and capacity evaluations and team consultation as needed).
- Community Living Center (CLC):
 - Brief cognitive assessments and capacity evaluations for inpatients (e.g., evaluation of capacity to make medical decisions such as discharge planning or declining treatment)
 - Interdisciplinary team consultation

In addition to general psychology postdoctoral programming within VA St. Louis Health Care System (e.g., various enrichment seminars, Psychology Training Seminar, Psychology Grand Rounds), the VA St. Louis Health Care System Neuropsychology faculty provides didactic experiences including weekly Neuropsychology Case Conference and Neuropsychology Journal Club alternating two weeks each month. Additionally a monthly Neuropsychology Neuroanatomy and Neuropathology Seminar intended to prepare residents for board certification is held. Residents and interns participate in leading case conferences and journal club presentations. The VA St. Louis Health Care System, through its academic affiliations with two leading universities (Washington University in St. Louis [WUSTL] and Saint Louis University), is able to provide a wide range of didactic opportunities for neuropsychology residents. Our program collaborates extensively with WUSTL. Residents are currently participating in WUMC Neurology Grand Rounds and WUMC Neuropathology / Brain Cutting Case Conference. Additionally, we have an active Program Letter of Agreement between VA STL HCS and Washington University School of Medicine for Residents to attend various Medical Neuroscience didactics via the Washington University School of Medicine Gateway Curriculum during Year Two as a capstone didactic experience.

SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

Per APA regulations, residents will receive a minimum of two hours of direct supervision per week, with more than one supervisor over the course of the training year.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING EXPERIENCES/REQUIREMENTS

In addition to completing the core training experiences in their area of emphasis as described above, residents will also be required to participate in 5 hours/week of professional learning experiences designed to provide advanced training and meet Missouri licensure requirements for additional learning experiences. This will include but not be limited to:

- Enrichment Seminars Advanced training in core competency areas of:
 - Evidenced-Based Treatment (6 hours per EBT)
 - Diversity/Multicultural Competency (18 hours)
 - Clinical Supervision (19 hours)
 - Professional Development (9 hours)
- Peer-reviewed psychology case conferences (average 1.5 hrs/month)
- Inter-professional treatment team meetings on their respective area of specialty (1-2 hrs/week)
- Professional Reading (Minimum of 1 hr/week)
- Scholarly Activity Project Design, collection, analysis, and presentation of Quality Management/Performance Improvement/Research (estimated 2 hrs/week)
- Supervision/Mentoring of junior trainees (1 hr/week of resident-led supervision typically occurring during a training placement with a concurrent intern or practicum student during part of the training year when possible)

Scholarly Activity Project

Residents' training experiences over the course of a year typically focus on clinical work with the goal of integrating scientific and theoretical knowledge gained through your previous studies and practica. Residents across each of the emphasis areas are expected to develop a meaningful project during their training year. These projects vary widely and are agreed upon by both residents and their primary supervisors. Protected time is allotted to this enterprise on a weekly basis, as appropriate, and a final product is expected at the end of the year. The final product is presented by the Resident during their assigned Grand Rounds presentation timeslot, and their Power Point presentation is turned in to demonstrate completion of the project. While there may be opportunities to join already approved IRB research projects within our hospital, which would meet the expectation of a meaningful project, most residents will not find it feasible to develop a new research project and have it passed through the IRB prior to the end of the training year. However, residents are offered opportunities to become involved in performance improvement and quality assurance projects within the department as another path to completing a meaningful project.*

**Any other collection of clinical data for research purposes outside of performance improvement and quality assurance efforts requires the concurrence of the Research & Development and Medical Center IRB approval.*

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS

A wide range of support facilities will be available to residents, as described in the above sections. Residents will be provided the necessary office space and/or equipment in which to provide professional services in an appropriately confidential and secure manner. Residents will have access to all of the clerical and technical support available to senior staff including computer/internet access, computer support personnel, and medical media (for presentation services). The John Cochran Division

of the medical center has a medical library which contains approximately 2600 volumes in the areas of Psychology and Psychiatry, and currently subscribes to 50 journals in the behavioral sciences, with additional journal access through ProQuest Psychology Data base with an additional access to 68 mental health-related journals. Extensive computer services are available, including all major medical on-line data base/literature search capabilities, inter-library loan services, and library support services.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY COUNCIL (C3)

The Cultural Competency Council (C3) aims to be a model and source of education, training, and support for staff and veterans we serve, fostering a culture of awareness, safety, respect, and celebration of diversity in all its forms and promoting clinical cultural competency as a standard of care in the VA St. Louis health Care System. Core areas of focus for C3 include: 1) Providing culturally competent training to members of the psychology staff, 2) Maintaining accessible resources for staff and trainees on topics related to diversity and cultural competency, 3) Being available as a resource to members of the psychology staff for consultation to discuss clinical cases, 4) Organizing and implementing the intern and resident Diversity Seminar, and 5) Assisting in the hiring and retention of diverse psychological staff members.

Psychology interns and residents are incorporated and integrated into C3. Trainees attend meetings and are active participants on subcommittees, especially within our media subcommittee.

EVALUATION OF TRAINING PLAN AND PROGRESS

Within the first month of the residency, each resident will, in concert with their designated supervisor(s), develop a learning agreement to guide the structure and content of the training term. This agreement is subject to approval of the Training Director. The learning agreement will include, but may not necessarily be limited to, the following core competency training objectives:

- Advanced skills in targeting, conducting, and interpreting psychological assessments and communicating assessment findings
- Advanced skills in conceptualizing, implementing, and evaluating evidenced-based treatment interventions
- Skills in conducting effective inter-professional consultation with staff of diverse professional and cultural backgrounds and in developing and maintaining a viable and effective professional psychological role on multi-disciplinary teams
- Skills in understanding and adhering to APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct as well as relevant laws, regulations, rules, and policies governing health service psychology
- Skills in: 1) demonstrating awareness and understanding of own personal/cultural history, attitudes, and biases, 2) demonstrating depth of client conceptualization

based upon broadest interpretation of diversity, and 3) integrating theoretical and empirical knowledge of diversity, culture, and social justice principles into practice

- Skills in using the existing and evolving body of knowledge and methods in the science and practice of psychology, including developing and implementing a quality management, performance improvement or comparable scholarly project to be performed over the course of the year
- Advanced skills in demonstrating appropriate professional values, attitudes, and behavior
- Advanced skills in: 1) developing and maintaining relationships with a wide range of clients, colleagues, organizations, communities, supervisors, and patients, 2) verbal, nonverbal, and written communication that is professional, integrated, and informative
- Skills in demonstrating: 1) knowledge of the ethical, legal, and contextual issues of the supervisor role and, 2) effective (supervised) supervision skills

Formal competency evaluations of the progress of residents are conducted quarterly and two weeks before the end of the semester for each semester (for a total of 4 evaluations over the training year). Second year Neuropsychology residents are evaluated at the same intervals in year two as well. However, informal feedback opportunities regarding performance are expected to occur on a regular basis in the context of supervision. Each formal evaluation will be completed by the primary and secondary supervisors and will be reviewed with the resident. Each evaluation meeting will address, but not be limited to:

- Progress of the resident in meeting the stated training/competency objectives, goals and expectations specified in the learning contract, with suggestions for improvement (if needed) in the areas of professional conduct, ethics, assessment, consultation, etc.
- Any amendments/revisions of the learning agreement as needed

All evaluations are documented in writing and electronically signed by both the supervisor(s) and resident.

EVALUATION OF TRAINING PROGRAM STRUCTURE, METHOD, AND OUTCOME

As above, a formal, written competency evaluation of the resident by the primary supervisor(s) occurs at mid-rotation and two weeks before the end of the semester for each semester or in accordance with the resident's specific learning agreement. Feedback will also be provided to the supervisor to assure reciprocal data on quality of supervisory training. This is done through the resident's completion of a Supervisor Assessment at the end of their training. Additionally, all psychology trainees are surveyed in the spring using an anonymous web-based format in order to solicit confidential feedback about several elements of the training program. This information is utilized in an aggregated format by the Training Director when the Training Council

hosts its yearly Strategic Planning conference. Finally, we administer a one-year post-graduate survey to residents to evaluate their perception of how well the training program helped them meet necessary competencies. All of the information solicited from trainees is reviewed and used by the Training Council in order to continue working toward continuous improvement in our program's structure and method of training.

PERSONNEL INFORMATION

This residency is typically completed as a 12-month, 2,080 hour full-time appointment (with exception of Neuropsychology, which is a two year appointment with the second year contingent on satisfactory completion of the first year). Acceptance of an appointment requires a commitment to complete the entire training period. Details regarding these requirements will be reviewed during your orientation period.

Benefits include 11 federal holidays, health insurance, acquired sick leave (4 hours per 2-week pay period), and annual leave (4 hours per 2-week pay period) that may be used during the year after the leave hours have been accrued. In addition, up to 120 hours/year (15 days) of "authorized absence" may be used, with approval. Authorized absence is to be used for professionally related activities (e.g., attendance at educational/professionally-relevant meetings, conventions, workshops) or to support interview travel for VA positions. These authorized absences are contingent upon administrative approval and count towards the 2,080 hours of training. Malpractice coverage for official duties is provided under the Federal Tort Claims Act. You will be fully briefed on all personnel practices during your orientation period upon arriving on site including the program's grievance and due process policy (see Attachment 1).

The VA is a federal government organization and an equal opportunity employer. The training program strongly encourages applications from all qualified applicants. **We value diversity in all its forms, including gender, age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and disability. We take a strong stance regarding policies of non-discrimination and accommodation for success in our residency program.**

Pay:

In 2023-2024, residents in a one-year placement and first year residents in the two-year neuropsychology program will be paid \$47,013. Neuropsychology residents in their second year of residency will be paid \$49,554, contingent upon satisfactory performance in year one.

Family Leave:

We are committed to facilitating parental leave for the arrival of new children consistent with APPIC guidelines. The VA allows up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during a 12-month period, to assist families with new children by birth, adoption, or foster care. We try to arrange plans for leave as soon as we have notice. We first encourage expecting parents to check with Human Resources to ensure they understand the entirety of benefits and leave available to them. We then assist with planning for the return after family leave, including establishing time and space for breastfeeding routines, should

they choose to do so, and we work to ensure the completion of all 2080 hours of equivalent training experiences which meet our program's aims, training goals, competencies, and outcomes. All required training activities missed during the period of leave will be made up in equivalent fashion.

Please note: If you are an active duty military member, or if you are a federal retiree (civil service or military) receiving a retirement pension/annuity, you should identify this status in the initial application process as this may affect your stipend. Following acceptance, final appointments are contingent upon passing standard federal employment screenings and requirements (e.g., physical exam, background checks, electronic fingerprinting, etc.). If you have any questions about these standard requirements for VA employment, please contact our HR at 314-894-6620 for additional information.

Targeted Start Date for 2023/2024 Training Year: **July 17, 2023**

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Health Professions Trainees (HPTs) are appointed as temporary employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. As such, HPTs are subject to laws, policies, and guidelines posted for VA staff members. There are infrequent times in which this guidance can change during a training year which may create new requirements or responsibilities for HPTs. If employment requirements change during the course of a training year, HPTs will be notified of the change and impact as soon as possible and options provided. The VA Training Director for your profession will provide you with the information you need to understand the requirement and reasons for the requirement in timely manner.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adheres to all Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies. As a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Health Professions Trainee, as a Psychology Resident, you will receive a Federal appointment, and the following requirements will apply prior to that appointment:

- A. **U.S. Citizenship.** Interns must have U.S. citizenship. VA is unable to consider applications from anyone who is not currently a U.S. citizen. Verification of citizenship is required following selection. All interns must complete a Certification of Citizenship in the United States prior to beginning VA training.
- B. **U.S. Social Security Number.** All VA appointees must have a U.S. social security number (SSN) prior to beginning the pre-employment, on-boarding process at the VA.
- C. **Selective Service Registration.** Any individual born male on their birth certificate regardless of current gender born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the

Selective Service by age 26 to be eligible for U.S. government employment, including selection as a paid or WOC VA trainee. For additional information about the Selective Service System, and to register or to check your registration status visit <https://www.sss.gov/>. Applicants meeting the aforementioned criteria must sign a pre-appointment Certification Statement for Selective Service Registration before they can be processed into a training program. Anyone who was required to register but did not register before the age of 26 will need to apply for a Status Information Letter (SIL) and request a waiver. Waivers are rare and requests will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the VA Office of Human Resources Management. This process can take up to six months for a verdict. Exceptions are very rarely granted, but have been made within our program when necessary and appropriate.

- D. **Fingerprint Screening and Background Investigation.** Residents will be fingerprinted and undergo screenings and background investigations. Additional details about the required background checks can be found at the following website: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10450.html>.
- E. **Drug Testing.** Per Executive Order 12564, the VA strives to be a Drug-Free Workplace. Residents are not drug-tested prior to appointment, however are subject to random drug testing throughout the entire VA appointment period. Be aware that VA will initiate termination of VA appointment and/or dismissal from VA rotation against any trainee who is found to use illegal drugs on the basis of a verified positive drug test (even if a drug is legal and/or prescribed in the state where training), or refuses to be drug tested. Please find more information here: [VA Drug-Free Workplace Program Guide for Veterans Health Administration Health Professions Trainees](#)
- F. Completion of doctoral degree, including defense of dissertation, from a clinical or counseling psychology doctoral programs accredited by the American Psychological Association (APA) or the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) before the start date of the residency.
- G. Completion of an APA-accredited psychology internship program.
- H. Additional information specific suitability information from Title 5 (referenced in VHA Handbook 5005):
 - (a) Specific factors. In determining whether a person is suitable for Federal employment, only the following factors will be considered a basis for finding a person unsuitable and taking a suitability action:
 - (1) Misconduct or negligence in employment;
 - (2) Criminal or dishonest conduct;
 - (3) Material, intentional false statement, or deception or fraud in examination or appointment;
 - (4) Refusal to furnish testimony as required by § 5.4 of this chapter;

- (5) Alcohol abuse, without evidence of substantial rehabilitation, of a nature and duration that suggests that the applicant or appointee would be prevented from performing the duties of the position in question, or would constitute a direct threat to the property or safety of the applicant or appointee or others;
- (6) Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances without evidence of substantial rehabilitation;
- (7) Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force; and
- (8) Any statutory or regulatory bar which prevents the lawful employment of the person involved in the position in question.

(b) Additional considerations. OPM and agencies must consider any of the following additional considerations to the extent OPM or the relevant agency, in its sole discretion, deems any of them pertinent to the individual case:

- (1) The nature of the position for which the person is applying or in which the person is employed;
- (2) The nature and seriousness of the conduct;
- (3) The circumstances surrounding the conduct;
- (4) The recency of the conduct;
- (5) The age of the person involved at the time of the conduct;
- (6) Contributing societal conditions; and
- (7) The absence or presence of rehabilitation or efforts toward rehabilitation.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Applications for consideration will be received through APPA CAS in all but extenuating circumstances.

Please see APPIC's Postdoctoral Selection Guidelines for further information:

<http://www.appic.org/About-APPIC/Postdoctoral/APPIC-Postdoctoral-Selection-Guidelines>

To apply, create an APPA CAS profile, upload required documents (e.g., transcripts), and also enter the following:

1. A cover letter describing how you feel this residency would assist you in meeting your career goals.
2. A current curriculum vita.
3. Three letters of recommendation (referred to as "Evaluations" in the APPA CAS portal). Preferably one of these will be from your internship director and will provide indication of your status in that program and whether you have been on a remediation plan.
4. A letter from your dissertation chair or training director confirming your anticipated completion date and date of degree conferral (if one of your recommendation letters is from your dissertation chair or training director, and includes this information, no additional letter is necessary).

5. Submit an abstract of your dissertation if it has already been completed.
6. A HIPPA compliant de-identified work sample from a psychological assessment report or a case presentation.

APPLICATION DUE DATE FOR TRADITIONAL CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY:

Health Psychology, PTSD, EBP and Geropsychology positions will follow the APPIC Postdoctoral Selection Guidelines.

- **Application reviews for all programs will begin by January 2, 2023.**
- Each residency program will set up their own dates and times for interviews based upon interview panel availability. **Please note: ONLY virtual/remote interview day activities will be used for all interviewees, including local candidates, to support safe and equitable practices.** An optional, virtual non-evaluative open house will be held on January 27, 2023.
- Traditional residency positions (Health Psychology, PTSD, EBP and Geropsychology) will rank order applicants for the positions to which each applicant has applied.

We will follow the APPIC Postdoctoral Selection Standards and Common Hold Date (CHD) procedures wherein offers will be made to top-ranked applicant(s) upon completing interviews and ranking all applicants for a position (usually within a few weeks of the CHD, which is 02/27/23).

APPLICATION DUE DATE FOR CLINICAL NEUROPSYCHOLOGY:

Our Clinical Neuropsychology program is an APPCN member program. Accordingly our program participates in the matching program for clinical neuropsychological postdoctoral residencies, administered by the National Matching Services (NMS). We will be participating in the APPCN Match process. **We adhere to all policies regarding the matching program. In specific, this residency site agrees to abide by the APPCN policy that no person at this facility will solicit, accept, or use any ranking-related information from any residency applicant.**

- **Applications are due December 12, 2022.**
- We intend to set up dates and times for interviews based upon interview panel availability. **Please note: ONLY virtual/remote interview day activities will be used for all interviewees, including local candidates, to support safe and equitable practices. We are committed to virtual/remote interviewing of applicants per recommendations by APPCN.**

The program will make interview offers for the neuropsychology residency program to identified best-fit applicants.

As we are following APPCN match policies, please refer to the websites for APPCN (www.appcn.org) and National Matching Services (www.natmatch.com/appcnmat) for more information on the matching program, including key dates for the 2023 match.

Please see “*Assessing Fit With Our Program*” in the Postdoctoral Residency Program Tables for information on preferences for interview offers and minimum criteria used to screen applicants.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

After screening written applications, we will select prospective residents to interview whom we believe will prosper at our site. **Please note: ONLY virtual/remote interview day activities will be used for all interviewees, including local candidates, to support safe and equitable practices.** We utilize a performance-based interview model (the standard VA employment interview format) which solicits information about prior training, skill/competency sets, knowledge of the area of emphasis/specialization for which you are applying, and relevant personal attributes that will promote a successful training experience. While we rely primarily on the written and performance-based interview data to assist us in making both good and fair choices among applicants, we also take qualitative data about a candidate's goodness of fit into consideration, where applicable, to augment ranking decisions.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ONBOARDING PROCESS

The VA requires several verifications before you can start your training year (even if you have already worked in another VA). In addition to the paperwork you will need to provide to Human Resources, verification of your degree is required, and the VHA Office of Academic Affiliations requires completion of a Trainee Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL). An Educational Official at the Affiliate must complete and sign this letter. For post-graduate programs where an affiliate is not the program sponsor, this process must be completed by the VA Training Director. Your VA appointment cannot happen until the TQCVL is submitted and signed by senior leadership from the VA facility. For more information about this document, please visit <https://www.va.gov/OAA/TQCVL.asp>

- 1) Primary source verification of doctoral degree. We require a letter from your Director of Training, on letterhead, stating the date you completed all requirements for the doctoral degree and what the accredited doctoral degree was in (e.g., Ph.D. or Psy.D. in either Clinical or Counseling Psychology).
- 2) Identification of any current or past licenses, certifications, registrations you have had. If you are or have been licensed in any profession, please let us know, and identify if there were any practice issues. Additionally, know we will need be checking the following websites (<https://www.npdb.hrsa.gov/> and <https://exclusions.oig.hhs.gov/>) in attempt to ensure compliance with this expectation.
- 3) **Proof of Identity per VA.** VA on-boarding requires presentation of two source documents (IDs). Documents must be unexpired and names on both documents must match. For more information visit: https://www.oit.va.gov/programs/piv/_media/docs/IDMatrix.pdf

If you have previously trained or worked at a VA, please let us know so HR can obtain this information by pulling up your I-9 form. If not, you will need to visit

your local VA (or the St. Louis VA) with the required documents to verify your U.S. Citizenship. Unfortunately, this must be done in person (i.e., photocopied documents or a notarized statement is not acceptable).

- 4) **Health Requirements.** Among other things, the TQCVL confirms that you, the trainee, are fit to perform the essential functions (physical and mental) of the training program and immunized following current Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and VHA policy. This protects you, other employees and patients while working in a healthcare facility. Required are annual tuberculosis screening, Hepatitis B vaccine as well as annual influenza vaccine. *Declinations are EXTREMELY rare.* If you decline the flu vaccine you are not allowed to train in a VA facility. It is VA policy that all VA Administrations and Staff Offices will implement a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination program by requiring all employees, including VHA HCP, to receive a COVID-19 vaccination or obtain an exception for medical or religious reasons. Compliance with this policy is a requirement and employees in violation of this policy may face disciplinary action up to and including removal from Federal service.
- 5) **Additional On-boarding Forms.** Additional pre-employment forms include the Application for Health Professions Trainees (VA 10-2850D) and the Declaration for Federal Employment (OF 306). These documents and others are available online for review at <https://www.va.gov/oaa/app-forms.asp>. Falsifying any answer on these required Federal documents will result in the inability to appoint or immediate dismissal from the training program.

POSTDOCTORAL RESIDENCY ADMISSIONS, SUPPORT, AND INITIAL PLACEMENT DATA

POSTDOCTORAL PROGRAM TABLES

Program Tables updated: July 1, 2022

Program Disclosures	
Does the program or institution require students, trainees, and/or staff (faculty) to comply with specific policies or practices related to the institution's affiliation or purpose? Such policies or practices may include, but are not limited to, admissions, hiring, retention policies, and/or requirements for completion that express mission and values.	No
If yes, provide website link (or content from brochure) where this specific information is presented:	N/A

Postdoctoral Program Admissions	
Briefly describe in narrative form important information to assist potential applicants in assessing their likely fit with your program. This description must be consistent with the program's policies on resident selection and practicum and academic preparation requirements:	
<p>The primary supervisors and training leadership review submissions and invite interviewees based upon their assessment of fit with our program on the following criteria (in no order of priority):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Similarities between expressed training interests and the training emphasis and opportunities of the residency program. ○ Strength of endorsement provided in letters of recommendation from those who know the applicants well. ○ Evidence of advanced clinical or counseling experiences working with populations and problems relevant to the emphasis area to which the applicant has applied. ○ Evidence of scientific knowledge base from graduate training and internship experiences in assessment, intervention, and scholarly/research activities relevant to the emphasis area to which the applicant has applied as well. ○ Prior VA experience is considered favorable but is not required. ○ Interview preference is given to applicants meeting the descriptions above and whose material indicates experiences and activities demonstrating their cultivation of cross-cultural awareness, sensitivity, and advocacy skills or who identify themselves as representing a diverse group on the basis of disability status, gender identity, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic background, religion, or country of origin. ○ Interview preference is given to military Veteran applicants meeting the descriptions above. 	
Describe any other required minimum criteria used to screen applicants:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicants must come from APA or CPA accredited graduate and internship programs. ○ The VA requires that residents be citizens of the United States. ○ The VA does not allow residents who have been convicted of a felony. <p>We require completion of doctoral degree and will not onboard new-hire residents whose dissertations are not completed prior to the start date of the residency.</p> <p>Please see “APPLICATION PROCESS” in section above for complete application process information.</p>	
Financial and Other Benefit Support for Upcoming Training Year*	
Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-time Year 1 Residents	\$47,013
Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-time Year 2 Residents	\$49,554
Annual Stipend/Salary for Half-time Residents	N/A
Program provides access to medical insurance for Resident?	Yes
If access to medical insurance is provided:	
Trainee contribution to cost required?	Yes
Coverage of family member(s) available?	Yes
Coverage of legally married partner available?	Yes
Coverage of domestic partner available?	No
Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off (PTO and/or Vacation)	104
Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave	104
In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to residents in excess of personal time off and sick leave?	Yes, up to 12 weeks

Other Benefits (please describe):	
11 paid Federal holidays	
*Note. Programs are not required by Commission on Accreditation to provide all benefits listed in this table.	
Initial Post-Residency Positions	
(Provide an Aggregated Tally for the Preceding 3 cohorts)	2018-21
Total # of Residents who were in the 3 cohorts	14
Total # of Residents who remain in training in the residency program	1*
Academic teaching	PD = 0, EP = 0
Community mental health center	PD = 0, EP = 0
Consortium	PD = 0, EP = 0
University Counseling Center	PD = 0, EP = 0
Hospital/Medical Center	PD = 0, EP = 4
Veterans Affairs Health Care System	PD = 0, EP = 9
Psychiatric facility	PD = 0, EP = 0
Correctional facility	PD = 0, EP = 0
Health maintenance organization	PD = 0, EP = 0
School district/system	PD = 0, EP = 0
Independent practice setting	PD = 0, EP = 0
Other	PD = 0, EP = 0
Note: "PD" = Post-doctoral residency position; "EP" = Employed Position. Each individual represented in this table should be counted only one time. For former trainees working in more than one setting, select the setting that represents their primary position.	
*Year 2 Neuropsychology Position	

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BIOGRAPHICAL VIGNETTES OF PSYCHOLOGY STAFF

Lauren Albinson, Psy.D. (Trauma Recover Program) Dr. Albinson is a St. Louis native. Upon graduating high school she moved south, where she completed a double major in Psychology and Spanish at the University of Central Arkansas. Dr. Albinson moved back to Missouri to complete her Master's and Doctorate work at The Forest Institute of Professional Psychology in Springfield. Hoping to escape the heat and humidity of the Midwest, she transitioned north to complete her internship and postdoctoral residency with the Alaska Psychology Internship Consortium. During this time, she lived in the remote city of Nome, Alaska where her interest for working with trauma survivors was solidified as she navigated work with a high-risk population for substances, suicide, and childhood abuse. Dr. Albinson was an integral part in establishing a mental health presence at the only hospital in the region through their Primary Care Clinic, as well as helping to create and initiate the first APPIC approved Postdoctoral Fellowship in the state of Alaska. She greatly enjoyed the beauty and remote nature of Nome and the surrounding villages she served. She had the unique opportunity to dog sled across the tundra, pick wild blueberries, witness musk ox, moose, and bears in their natural habitat, and take in the delicacies of the native culture (although she will admit they were not always to her liking; i.e. seal oil, whale blubber). Although she enjoyed her time in Alaska greatly, she moved from the Land of the Midnight Sun back to the "Lower 48" to be closer to family. Dr. Albinson joined the VA in 2016 when she transitioned to working with the PTSD Clinic right outside of Nashville, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Although having been trained in EMDR already, she became proficient in CPT, PE, and CBCT to assist in her work with trauma survivors and their families. Her love for the outdoors continued as she explored the numerous hiking trails and waterfalls that Tennessee has to offer. Dr. Albinson had the opportunity to return to her hometown in 2020, working as part of the PTSD Clinical Team in St. Louis. She works from an interpersonal approach, utilizing EBPs to assist veterans in making connections between their trauma events and their day-to-day relationships, hoping to create more harmony between the two. She finds fulfillment in being an active part of community outreach as well. In her personal life, Dr. Albinson enjoys spending time with her husband and family (especially her beautiful nieces). In addition to her love of the outdoors, she is an avid reader and movie-goer!

Alex Alvarez, Ph.D. (Spinal Cord Injury) Dr. Alvarez grew up in a small country town in north Florida with the belief that any town with more than 3 red lights was the BIG city. In pursuit of adventure he joined the U.S. Army and served 4 years in the military. It was during this time that he developed a passion and desire to help fellow veterans. He left the Army and received his B.S. in Psychology from the University of Florida (2008). While at UF, he enjoyed an amazing era of football and basketball that included 4 national championships and a Heisman trophy. Go Gators! He completed his M.S. in Counseling (2013) and Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology (2017) at Oklahoma State University. Go Pokes! He did his internship at the Salt Lake City VA Health Care System and completed his postdoctoral fellowship in Evidenced Based Psychotherapy (EBP) at the St. Louis VA Health Care System. Tired of constantly moving and ready to put down roots, him and his family decided to settle in St. Louis and now they love

calling it home. Hired initially after postdoc to offer behavioral health services in the ComPACT Clinic (specialty primary care clinic for medically complex veterans), he now works in the Spinal Cord Injury Center and absolutely loves this job. There are two seasons in his life, football season and countdown to football season. When he isn't cheering on his collegiate teams or researching for his fantasy football teams, he enjoys listening to ragga music, bingeing TV shows late at night, and loves spending time with his wife and two beautiful children (toddler daughter and infant son).

Jennifer Battles, Ph.D. (Primary Care Mental Health Integration – Jefferson Barracks) Dr. Battles grew up in a military family and has lived in most areas of the country. She spent the longest in the town of Leavenworth, KS where her elementary school was next to a federal penitentiary and a field of buffalo. She earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in clinical psychology at Missouri State University and then transferred to Eastern Michigan University for her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. She completed her clinical internship and residency at VA St. Louis HCS and loved it so much she wanted to stay as staff in the busiest PCMH clinic. She has a specialty in health psychology with specific research and clinical interests in weight management, eating disorders, and diabetes. She has found a new love of Women's Mental Health and recently completed training in reproductive mental health (ask her about it and you will be trapped in a 30-minute conversation). She enjoys working in PCMH where she sees every clinical presentation imaginable while sharpening her health psychology skills. She also serves as a member of the eating disorder and bariatric interdisciplinary teams. She is passionate about quality improvement and third-wave behavior therapies. In her spare time, she enjoys the great outdoors, teaching and practicing yoga, tending to copious houseplants, and traveling with her husband and soon-to-be-born son (Baby Battles coming in Oct. 2022!).

Jeffrey Benware, Ph.D., MBA, ABPP (Inpatient Mental Health Program Manager) Dr. Benware grew up in a suburb on the south side of Chicago. He completed his Bachelors and Master's degree in Psychology from Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois. He completed an extensive qualitative study of tex-mex cuisine and Texas jargon while attending the University of Houston where he completed his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology. After several years battling the heat and humidity in Texas he decided to return to the tranquil Midwest. He completed his predoctoral internship at the Harry S. Truman VA Medical Center in Columbia, Missouri. Prior to joining the St. Louis VA in 2008, Dr. Benware was employed as a psychologist at the Chillicothe, Ohio VAMC. Dr. Benware is currently the program manager for the VA St. Louis Inpatient Mental Health Service. His clinical interests include substance abuse treatment, diagnostic assessment, crisis intervention, and the coordination of inpatient mental health services. Dr. Benware is board certified in Clinical Psychology through the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). He also holds a Certificate of Proficiency in the Treatment of Alcohol and Other Psychoactive Substance Use Disorders through the American Psychological Association.

Warren Bowles III, Psy.D. (Trauma Recovery Program) Originally from Southern, Illinois Dr. Warren Bowles III obtained his Bachelors of Art from McKendree University,

his Masters in Community Counseling from Southern Illinois University, and his Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology (Psy.D.) from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology, specializing with a concentration in neuropsychology. Dr. Bowles completed his internship at the Robely Rex VA Medical Center in Louisville, KY, and his postdoc at the Marion VA Medical Center. He is currently a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LCPC), Certified Addictions Counselor (CADC) and Clinical Psychologist with a variety of interests which include substance use, treatment of trauma, co-occurring disorders, third wave CBT treatment modalities, and biopsychology.

Tara Casady, Ph.D. (Suicide Prevention Team) Dr. Casady graduated with a major in Psychology and a minor in Spanish from Western Michigan University. She loved her radical behavior analytic training so much she decided to pursue her MA/PhD with Western Michigan University as well. Dr. Casady graduated with her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 2016. Dr. Casady completed her internship at the Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System in Biloxi, MS and postdoctoral residency in trauma psychology at the STRONG STAR Research Consortium at Ft. Hood in Texas. During her two-year postdoctoral residency she specialized in Cognitive Processing Therapy, CBT for Insomnia, and Exposure, Relaxation, and Rescripting Therapy. Soon after postdoctoral residency, Dr. Casady joined her Active Duty husband in Fairbanks, Alaska. Dr. Casady served as a Clinical Psychologist for Embedded Behavioral Health and the Substance Use Disorder Clinical Care clinic at Ft. Wainwright, serving Active Duty Army Service Members. Dr. Casady has also served as a board member and volunteer clinician for a variety of Harm Reduction organizations in the states she has lived. For self-care and fun, Dr. Casady enjoys outdoor activities, taking care of her numerous plants, and going on adventures whenever possible.

Rebecca Chesher, Ph.D. (Behavioral Health Intervention Program – Jefferson Barracks) Dr. Chesher grew up in the great city of Chicago (the actual city, not a suburb, it's a Chicago thing). She took the long way through her higher education journey by joining the US Army and getting her B.S. in bits and pieces from different schools between extended vacations in Iraq and Afghanistan and then finally finishing at the University of Illinois – Urbana/Champaign. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Missouri – St. Louis where she spent many hours in a small, windowless room of the Center for Trauma Recovery researching the psychophysiology of trauma, PTSD, and sleep disturbance. She completed her internship at the James Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago where she worked with Veterans and Active-Duty Navy and Marine personnel and enjoyed deep dish pizza and gyros again. She completed her post doc at the St. Louis VA HCS split between BHIP and TRP and decided she was done moving and begged to stay. In her spare time, she likes to make complicated new recipes with her son (and eat them of course), watch baseball and hockey with her husband (Cubs and Blackhawks of course), and chase her daughter around.

Chelsi A. Creech, Psy.D. (Palliative Care) Dr. Creech fell in love with St. Louis when she first moved here for undergrad, attending Saint Louis University to study psychology

and theology. There, she found her passion for integrating the two in research and began studying how people use religious or spiritual beliefs to cope with difficult life circumstances. While completing her doctorate at Regent University in Virginia Beach, VA, she focused on how religious, spiritual, and other cultural beliefs played a role in adjusting to various chronic health conditions. On practica at a long term care facility, she developed a Life Review psychotherapy group for patients with mild cognitive impairments. Remembering how much she had enjoyed her time in St. Louis as an undergrad, Dr. Creech opened these very bios while researching internships and decided to apply. On internship, she completed rotations in psychoncology, palliative care, interdisciplinary pain rehab, and outpatient mental health with older adults. This training cemented her decision to pursue a specialty in geropsychology. Approximately one month before the world shut down in 2020, she was delighted to accept the Geropsychology Post Doc at the St. Louis VA. During the post doc year, she joined the Cultural Competency Council and has remained a member now that she is on staff, as a member of the Media Subcommittee. After residency, Dr. Creech joined staff as the Palliative Care psychologist. She also assists with training through didactics, both to the training classes at this VA and presenting to the National VA Palliative Care on cultural humility in end of life, and supervision. In her free time, Dr. Creech enjoys knitting, a good mystery novel, dreaming about her next trip overseas, and begrudgingly cheering for the St. Louis Cardinals (when they aren't playing her hometown Cincinnati Reds).

Joe Daus, Ph.D. (Mental Health Clinic – Jefferson Barracks) Dr. Daus received his AB (1989) in Psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia (MU) where he enjoyed bad football so much he remained at MU for both his MA (1991) and Ph.D. (1995), both in counseling psychology. He completed his internship at MU's Counseling Center and returned to his hometown of St. Louis where he was employed with St. Louis City's Family Court-Juvenile Division for a little over seven years. In December 2002, Joe gladly accepted employment with the St. Louis VA where he became part of the new Mental Health Intensive Case Management (MHICM) Program, a program that provides community outreach services to Veterans with serious mental illness. In September 2018, Joe transferred to the VA's Mental Health Clinic (MHC) where he currently provides Evidence Based Psychotherapy to Veterans struggling with depression and trauma. Joe also maintains a part time private practice in the evening and is married and has two daughters.

Sean Engelkemeyer, Ph.D. (Home-Based Primary Care) Born and raised near St. Louis in the smallish town of Washington, Missouri, Dr. Engelkemeyer has long been aware of the wonderful qualities of Midwestern living. Possibly due to his small-town upbringing, he increasingly enjoys 'spinning yarns' about life in the country. He loved Missouri living so much (others say he just did not get out much) that he completed his B.A. in Psychology at St. Louis University (2002). He then traveled the long miles across town to complete his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Missouri – St. Louis (2008). His doctoral dissertation was in the area of death and dying, and this remains a clinical interest. His postdoctoral residency was completed in Psycho-Oncology at the Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes Jewish Hospital. Other clinical interests include geropsychology, anxiety disorders, sleep disorders,

nonpharmacological management of challenging behaviors in neurocognitive disorders, and the provision of home care services amidst strong smells of cat urine and towering piles of old newspapers. You can occasionally find Dr. Engelkemeyer outside of work camping, gardening, making things out of wood, and yelling at neighborhood kids for being on his lawn. His wife and two young sons find that last one particularly embarrassing. You can win him over with food that is fried, spicy, or edible in some way, or by guessing one of his celebrity doppelgangers.

Leslie French, Ph.D. (Home-Based Primary Care) Although she is not a military brat, Dr. French can relate to the frustration of having to answer the question “Where are you from?” She was born in New Mexico, but spent time in Missouri, Arizona (on the Navajo/Hopi reservation, in the only town in the US with two time zones), New Mexico again, and Texas. She completed her BA in Political Science and Psychology at the University of Missouri and her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at the University of Houston. By this time she had moved seven times and decided to stay put for a while, completing both her internship and post-doc in the St. Louis area (at the VA and St. Louis BMI Anxiety Disorders clinic, respectively). Following post-doc Dr. French went to work at the St. Louis City Family Court before returning to the VA to work in Home Based Primary Care. Her clinical interests include anxiety disorders, and issues of diversity. Dr. French previously had interests of her own but then she had children. Now she enjoys anything her two young sons are into, so you know, mostly loud, smelly, dirty things. If by some miracle she has time to herself she would probably spend it binge watching trashy teen soaps on Netflix. Don’t judge.

Elizabeth Garcia-Rea, Ph.D. (Mental Health Clinic-John Cochran) Dr. Garcia is a St. Louis native. She obtained her B.A. in Psychology and Criminology from Miami of Ohio. She returned home briefly to complete her Masters in Clinical Adult Psychology at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. She then moved down south to attend the University of North Texas, with an internship and post doc at the Dallas VA and finished up her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. After spending eight years in Texas she decided it was time to head back to the Midwest. Her research interests include anxiety disorders, multicultural issues, social deviance, and body image. Her primary theoretical orientation is Cognitive Behavioral, but she considers herself eclectic.

Devorah Ginn, Psy.D. (Primary Care Mental Health Integration) Dr. Ginn was born and raised in St. Louis. If you failed to notice by her name, she is Jewish and knows how to bake a challah and cook a brisket. Dr. Ginn ventured across the river to attend Southern Illinois University- Edwardsville where she graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Psychology in 2006. She then began her career in public service, working as a Probation and Parole officer for the state of Missouri. After running the streets for a few years, she moved to the Chicagoland area to attend graduate school at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology where she graduated in 2013. Moving back to the Missouri side, Dr. Ginn then took a tour of the Missouri Department of Mental Health facilities (Northwest Missouri Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center, Center for Behavioral Medicine, and Southeast Missouri Mental Health Center) to complete her internship and postdoc. She then settled in at the St. Louis County Court where she worked for over

seven years conducting Court-ordered evaluations. Dr. Ginn has now rounded out her public service by taking a federal job with the VA. She is committed to helping veterans enjoy more integrated and empowered lives. Outside of work, Dr. Ginn has two young sons who keep her nimble. She has a passion for rock climbing, mountain biking, and weight lifting.

Kate Goedeker, Ph.D. (Spinal Cord Injury) Dr. Goedeker is originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She attended the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she spent most of her time frozen. She received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Purdue University, and completed her internship at the VA St. Louis Health Care System in 2006. She was over the moon to start working in the Spinal Cord Injury Service in 2007; additionally, she began working in the ALS Outpatient Clinic in 2017. Dr. Goedeker's theoretical orientation is eclectic, though she generally uses CBT interventions. In addition her work with veterans with SCI and ALS, she is passionate about working with psychology trainees, mostly to discuss the best places to visit in and around St. Louis. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, running, and hanging out with her husband and daughters.

Grant Harris, Ph.D., ABPP [Geropsychology] (Geriatric Primary Care - GeriPACT) Dr. Harris was born at an early age in Louisville, KY. This made a lot of people very angry and has been widely regarded as a bad move. He attained a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Kentucky – Go Big Blue! He received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from The University of Alabama in 2014 with a clinical and research focus in geropsychology. While in graduate school he received an award and pin for being the “Most Humble Graduate Student.” However, the first time he wore the pin, they took it away. Dr. Harris completed his internship at the Memphis VAMC where he stayed for a fellowship in clinical health psychology. He moved with his wife and daughter to St. Louis in 2015 to start his dream job. His daughter's name is Ripley and she may or may not be named after the BAMF in the Alien movies. Dr. Harris was the first psychologist in the GeriPACT at the St. Louis VA and has initiated or helped initiate several programs, including an interdisciplinary dementia evaluation team and a Falls Shared Medical Appointment. Although he is generally averse to being part of any organization that would agree to let him be a member, he enjoys participating in the Dementia Committee and Disruptive Behaviors Committee. In his free time, Grant enjoys eating incredibly spicy Indian food, drinking the occasional vat of coffee, and having perpetual existential crises.

John R. Hogg, Ph.D., ABPP, Board Certified in Clinical Neuropsychology (Neuropsychology Residency Training Director; Neuropsychology Clinic) Dr. Hogg earned his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Indiana University-Bloomington (1992). He completed his APA-approved psychology internship at the University of Washington-Seattle School of Medicine (1990-1991), then completed a N.I.M.H. predoctoral fellowship in geriatrics (1991-1992) at the same UW (while completing his dissertation and continuing to enjoy the amazing beauty of Seattle – much more than Starbucks, Nirvana, and Pearl Jam). VA St. Louis HCS interns are free to ask Dr. Hogg to reminisce about his internship office view during his geriatric rotations and fellowship

(i.e., ocean, mountains, sailboats, etc.). He completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Clinical Neuropsychology at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago (1992-1993). He then worked as a Clinical Assistant Professor at the University of Missouri Health Sciences Center and stayed at MU for 10 years. Following a brief time in independent practice in St. Louis and missing the collegial atmosphere provided by fellow psychologists, he was pleased to join the outstanding group of psychologists at the VA St. Louis HCS in 2005. He serves as 1 of 3 Neuropsychologists at VA St. Louis HCS. Dr. Hogg is board certified in Clinical Neuropsychology through the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). While off-duty, he remains busy enjoying time with his family. He has historically trafficked in the sedentary arts (cinema, podcasts, restaurants). However, over time, he has increasingly yielded to the growing science linking regular exercise with brain health and dabbles in that activity as well. Out of an unwavering commitment to the economic health of the St. Louis region, he also supports the local craft brewing industry.

Brittany J. Jacobson, Ph.D. (Military Sexual Trauma Coordinator) Dr. Jacobson was born in St. Louis and raised here in the golden years when Nelly was at his prime. She earned a B.A. in Psychology from Truman State University in Northeast Missouri and was determined to leave the state for grad school. Dr. Jacobson's desire to experience a new culture of the Deep South and receive thorough training in multicultural issues took her to Mississippi. She earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Jackson State University. While conducting research with individuals who were hospitalized following a suicide attempt, Dr. Jacobson became interested in how to treat PTSD as they often disclosed that trauma-related symptoms were a contributing factor to the suicide attempt. She completed her internship and residency at VA St. Louis HCS where she specialized in trauma treatment of veterans who experienced combat and military sexual trauma (MST). Dr. Jacobson was then hired as the facility's MST Coordinator where she fulfills her passion for instilling hope, facilitating empowerment, and advocating for systemic change. She is a yoga teacher and leads a Yoga for Trauma Recovery class to assist veterans in furthering their healing. Dr. Jacobson also enjoys expanding awareness of mindful living and is a mindfulness-based stress reduction meditation facilitator. She can be found working on yoga arm balances, hiking, soaking up time with friends, and caring for her ever-expanding collection of plants.

Janet Johnson, Ph.D. (Primary Care Mental Health Integration - Women's Clinic) Dr. Johnson graduated with her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2007. While there, her research interests centered around the treatment for dual diagnosis of substance use and anxiety disorders. It was very cold there, so she warmed up on internship at the University of Maryland School of Medicine/VA Maryland Health Care System consortium in Baltimore. While there, she learned to appreciate Old Bay seasoning and decided that she wanted to have a career in the VA. She then went on to complete her post-doctoral fellowship in the Boston area at the Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial VA. As she is originally from Missouri, she decided that it was time to come home to her home state and began a position at the Columbia, MO VA Medical Center. While in Columbia, she pursued a variety of occupational interests, working with the PTSD Clinical Team, Mental Health Clinic, and in the

Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center. She also served as the Evidence Based Psychotherapy (EBP) Coordinator and the Local Recovery Coordinator. She even worked as a Supervisory Psychologist for a couple of years. She was certainly busy and definitely not bored. However, discussions with her husband, a native St. Louisan, led them to decide that it was time to move back to St. Louis to be closer to family. Luckily, in 2016, she was offered a position in C&P at the St. Louis VA Health Care System. She worked in C&P for almost two years, prior to starting her current job as PCMH psychologist for the Women's Clinic. At the Women's Clinic, she works as part of a primary care team and provides mental health triage assistance and brief therapy for Veterans who present with a wide range of mental health concerns. Additionally, she works with her inter-disciplinary team to offer shared medical appointments.

Christina Karageorgiou, Ph.D. (Primary Care Mental Health Integration – St. Charles CBOC) Dr. Karageorgiou originally hails from New York. She completed her Bachelors at Boston College, surviving four years in Red Sox territory. Her tour of universities continued with time spent completing her Masters at Columbia University, conducting research in psychiatric neuroimaging at Vanderbilt University, before finally settling down in St. Louis for her Ph.D. at Washington University in St. Louis. She completed her internship and postdoctoral residency at the VA St. Louis Healthcare System and is thrilled that she was able to stay on to work in primary care mental health integration at the St. Charles CBOC. Her theoretical orientation is eclectic, but leans towards cognitive behavioral. She is particularly interested in health psychology (chronic pain, insomnia) and often teams up with the pharmacist and dietician at her clinic for interventions related to chronic disease management. Outside of work, she can be found wrangling children and dogs (her own, not others), attempting to keep plants alive, and feeding friends and family.

David T. Klein, Psy.D. (PTSD, Team 1) Dr. Klein received his B.A. in Psychology from Muhlenberg College in 1991 and his doctorate from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology in 1997. He completed his internship here at the VA St. Louis Health Care System in 1995-96 and his postdoctoral work in the Department of Psychiatry at St. Louis University working primarily in geriatric psychiatry, conducting clinical trials research, and publishing works in the field of behavioral disturbances in dementia. He rejoined the VA in 1998 as a PTSD psychologist and diversified his duties into additional training, teaching, and administrative venues. His clinical time is primarily spent on the Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Unit conducting individual and group psychotherapy, assessment, student supervision, and consulting work. He was appointed Training Director for our internship and residency in 2002 and, with the resulting abundance of sensory triggers, enjoyed a decade's worth of occasional dissociative episodes from his days as an intern in his own training program. However, Dr. Klein retired from this position in 2012 to explore exactly what season of a man's life Levinson thinks he should currently be occupying. His clinical interests include the psychology of war (the Vietnam War in particular), combat-related PTSD, group process, therapeutic alliance and clinical outcome, and the temporal relationship between the studying for the EPPP and the onset of acute trauma symptoms among psychologists in training. Anecdotal

data suggests most of us recover. His theoretical orientation is eclectic predominated by dynamic, interpersonal, and existential conceptual models. Yalom remains an intellectual hero of his. In a previous life, Dr. Klein enjoyed gourmet food/cooking, wine, music, scuba diving, skiing, gardening, and hunting, and fly fishing when he had more abundant discretionary time. In lieu of time, he has 2 adolescents and more recently caved to their vicious Jedi mind trick and bought them a labradoodle puppy, Louie. Louie now enjoys running the family home around his interests which are eating, sleeping, playing, chewing on everything that are not his toys, and having a manic episode at about the time the family wishes to go to sleep. Now Dr. Klein wonders how he will ever find the time to determine what season of life he is in and has resorted to counting years of federal service as a proxy.

Jamie F. Klenke, Psy.D. (BHIP-Jefferson Barracks) Dr. Klenke was born and raised in a small town, famous for ...nothing. She earned her B.A. from University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and her doctorate from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology, choosing CBT as her theoretical orientation, with specific focus on ACT. While completing a practicum at Hines VA, Dr. Klenke discovered her interest in treating PTSD and working with Veterans. This experience (coupled with the fact that her family was noticing she had developed a bad case of road-rage and an awkward Chicago accent) led her back to St. Louis where she completed the STL VA predoctoral internship as well as the STL VA PTSD postdoctoral residency. Because she just really couldn't get enough, she joined the STL VA psychology staff in 2015, serving in the JB Mental Health Clinic (now BHIP), while also balancing part-time private practice. She has a strong interest in EBPs and has completed VA EBP trainings in CBT-D, CPT, IPT and PE. She is also a VA consultant for IPT and an external clinical consultant for the Metro East Vet Center. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband, daughters, and (very vocal) Redbone Coonhound, Wally.

Erin Kurtz, Ph.D. (Outpatient Mental Health Clinic/BHIP – Jefferson Barracks) Originally from the Chicagoland area, Dr. Kurtz did her undergraduate studies in French at Principia College, across the river from St. Louis in picturesque Elsah, IL. She lived and worked in St. Louis for a few years after, when her development of a love for Cardinals baseball blackballed her from returning to Chicago (the cold winters weren't very enticing either). After a brief stint teaching English in France and "finding herself," Dr. Kurtz ventured down to the land where they say "y'all" and completed undergraduate coursework in Psychology at the University of Houston. She earned her Ph.D. at the Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology in Norfolk, VA, where she was fortunate to do her first-year practica in the Chronic Pain and Polytrauma clinics at the Hampton VAMC, launching her interest in working with Veterans. When she saw the internship at the St. Louis VA was a good fit, she jumped at the chance to come back and see the Cards in their new stadium (and get high quality clinical training, of course). Dr. Kurtz re-returned to St. Louis to take a position in PCMH, after 2.5 years back in Virginia as a MIRECC Fellow in Post-deployment Mental Health at the Richmond VAMC. These days she is happy to be working in the Mental Health Clinic at JB, where she can dig into the trenches alongside Veterans working on depression, anxiety, trauma, and emotion regulation using cognitive-behavioral, interpersonal, and

emotion-focused interventions. With research and clinical interests in combat- and MST-related PTSD etiology, treatment, and resilience, she knows how beneficial it is to have a solid understanding of PTSD when working with Veterans seeking MH services. She has a strong interest in working with LGBTQ+ Veterans. Dr. Kurtz is excited to be back in one of her home-away-from-homes and exploring the family-friendly side of St. Louis with her 2 sons. She can be found trying to figure out whether to say “y’all” or “you guys” and checking out the area’s many delicious bakeries and coffee shops!

Rocky Liesman, Psy.D., ABPP (PCMHI Psychology Program Manager- STLVA) Dr. Liesman was born and raised in the Washington, MO area. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in psychology from St. Louis University. He attended graduate school for Clinical Psychology at Wright State University in Dayton, OH where he was awarded the HPSP scholarship from the United States Air Force. He completed his internship at Wright Patterson AFB in Dayton, OH and his follow-on assignment at Little Rock AFB in Little Rock, Arkansas. Prior to separating in August 2012, Dr. Liesman served in Afghanistan as the Clinical and Survival Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) psychologist for the Wardak province. Dr. Liesman went on to do a brief stint at the Kansas City VA where he served as Training Director for the Postdoctoral Psychology program. Dr. Liesman left the KCVA to take the job as the primary care psychologist at the Washington CBOC. Dr. Liesman currently serves as PCMHI program manager and does his clinical work out of the Franklin Co. CBOC. Professionally, he is board certified in Clinical Psychology and is certified as a Master's Level clinician in the administration and supervision of PE. He is VA certified as a provider, consultant, and trainer in Motivational Interviewing and is a VA certified provider in Interpersonal Psychotherapy. His interests include: application of brief empirically-supported treatments, secondary prevention and treatment of PTSD, integrated behavioral health in primary care, and general health psychology.

Sharon Lightfoot, Ph.D. (Washington Avenue PCMHI) Dr. Lightfoot is a St. Louis native. She received her B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. from St. Louis University and completed her internship at the Los Angeles VA Outpatient Clinic where she had the opportunity to work with Dr. Herman Feifel, who received an outstanding contribution to the field of psychology for his work on death and dying. Dr. Lightfoot has worked primarily in private practice in the St. Louis area. Special interests include forensic work in the area of employment discrimination and trauma, couples and group psychotherapy. She first worked at the VA in primary care at JB from 2012-2015 and then at Washington clinic beginning in 2018. Dr. Lightfoot serves on the State Committee of Psychology and completed a six-year term on the board of the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards. She is interested in the application of psychological science to improve social issues. The St. Louis Blues are her favorite team and she still cries when she watches their Game 7 Victory over the Bruins in 2019.

Julie Mastnak, Ph.D., ABPP (Program Manager, Trauma Recovery Program) Dr. Mastnak is a St. Louis native. She graduated with her B.S. in Biology from Truman State University. She completed her graduate work at the Center for Trauma Recovery

at the University of Missouri - St. Louis under the mentorship of Dr. Patricia Resick (Cognitive Processing Therapy). She completed her internship at the St. Louis VA. Dr. Mastnak graduated with her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 2005. A year later, she very happily returned to the St. Louis VA and has been here ever since. She and her husband have three beautiful daughters and an energetic puppy. When she is not busy at work, teaching, or hanging out with the kiddos, she spends her free time (wait a minute....what free time??)

Erin McInerney-Ernst, PhD (Program Manager of Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans-DCHV)

Dr. McInerney-Ernst is originally from New Orleans, Louisiana. She also spent some time living in the Houston, Texas area and earned a BA with honors from the University of Texas at Austin (Hook Em!). No stranger to heat and humidity, Dr. McInerney-Ernst slowly worked her way North to earn her PhD at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in Clinical Psychology with a Health Emphasis. Her training was focused on preventative health interventions, including medication adherence, functioning after grief and loss, and improving outcomes after bariatric surgery. She completed her Internship at the Eastern Kansas VA Healthcare System in Leavenworth Kansas, where she reluctantly participated in a required rotation in the 202 bed Domiciliary. Contrary to her initial hesitation, Dr. McInerney-Ernst fell in love with working in the Domiciliary environment. (Where else can you help Veterans as they work through the recovery process AND have awkward interactions with them in their bath robe?) During this time, the Veterans decided her name was too complicated and renamed her as Dr. Mack. Disappointed with the lack of pomp and circumstance when being renamed, she nonetheless accepted the re-branding and continues to be called Dr. Mack by Veterans and staff alike. After her internship, she completed a Postdoctoral fellowship at the Center for Behavioral Medicine where she provided services on a locked unit for individuals with chronic mental illness. Afterwards, she returned to the VA in Leavenworth and worked as a Clinical Psychologist for a 50 bed unit within the Domiciliary, primarily providing Cognitive Processing Therapy to Veterans with PTSD. In 2016, Dr. McInerney-Ernst transferred to the VA St. Louis Health Care System as Program Manager of the DCHV program on the Jefferson Barracks campus. With this change, Dr. Mack has found herself living next to the Mississippi River again. She especially enjoys it when people complain about the humidity in the summer (this is nothing compared to New Orleans in August!) and absolutely loves snow up until the holiday season- after that she is ready for warm weather again. She enjoys traveling and visiting family with her husband and two children. She also remains enthusiastic about walking beside Veterans as they work toward recovery in a residential setting. She has accepted that sometime this means that she might be having a deep conversation with them over a cup of coffee in the kitchen, with their bathrobe on.

Lauren C. Mensie, Ph.D. (Training Director and Community Living Center)

Dr. Mensie is originally from St. Louis, but also grew up in Texas and Ohio. She graduated from Lindenwood University in 2003 with a B.S. in Psychology (emphasis in lifelong Developmental Psychology). Dr. Mensie subsequently attended the University of Missouri – St. Louis and earned an MA (2005) and Ph.D. (2008) in Clinical Psychology, with a specialization in Clinical Geropsychology and a Graduate Certificate in

Gerontology. She completed her predoctoral internship at the Bay Pines VA Healthcare System in Bay Pines, Florida, enjoying top-notch training and the opportunity to live near the beach for the first time in her life. She returned to St. Louis in 2008 as the first postdoctoral resident in PCMHI at the VA St. Louis Health Care System (VASTLHCS). Dr. Mensie then worked as a staff psychologist within inpatient and outpatient geropsychiatry at the St. Louis VA for 6 years, before transitioning to her current role in the Community Living Center (CLC) in 2015. Her clinical work in the CLC primarily involves ACT, CBT, and STAR-VA interventions. Dr. Mensie greatly enjoys working with trainees and has served on the VASTLHCS Psychology Training Council since 2017. She currently serves as the Director of Psychology Training. Dr. Mensie attributes much of her longstanding interest in older adults and healthy aging to her amazing grandparents (who are and were exemplars of resilience and healthy, active living throughout the lifespan). She spends most of her time with her husband, kids, and dogs (all of whom are quite lovable and hilarious). In her free-time, Dr. Mensie enjoys oil painting, bargain-hunting, and drinking (very sweetened) coffee.

Fred Metzger, Ph.D. (ACOS of Mental Health) Dr. Metzger received his B.S. from the University of Iowa in 1991 and completed his Ph.D. in Health Psychology at the University of Kansas in 1999. He wandered aimlessly in the desert for a while (i.e., he was an intern at the Phoenix Psychology Consortium from 1998 to 1999) and a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Excellence in Substance Abuse Treatment and Education at the VA Puget Sound Health Care System from 1999 to 2000. While in Seattle, he learned that being upside down in a kayak is no fun. Dr. Metzger spends most of his timing dreaming up new ways to harass psychologists via e-mail but does manage to keep a small clinic active conducting pre-transplant evaluations. His theoretical orientation is largely cognitive-behavioral with a good dash of existentialism. In his free time, Dr. Metzger hikes, spends time with his wife and what are undoubtedly the best two dogs in the known universe. They would have been named the best dog in all the universe were it not for some minor character flaws. Sors, the Rottweiler mix, is a serial squirrel chaser (not catcher mind you, just chaser), while Wagner, a German Shepard, is convinced that Dr. Metzger is plotting his grisly demise.

Christopher Miller, Psy.D. (Trauma Recovery Program) Dr. Miller is originally from the St. Louis area. He received his B.A. from McKendree University in Lebanon, IL. He then braved the snowy and windy Chicago winters (the deep dish pizza did make it slightly more worth it) as he earned his M.A. (2012) and Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology with a concentration in Neuropsychology (2015) from Wheaton College. He completed his internship at the Missouri Health Science Psychology Consortium (Harry S Truman VA) in Columbia, MO and his postdoctoral residency here at VA St. Louis with the PTSD Clinical Teams (now Trauma Recovery Program; TRP) where he served combat Veterans of all eras. After a time in C&P at Scott Air Force Base and Mental Health Clinic, he is back with TRP providing CPT and PE for trauma recovery. His other clinical interests include anxiety/panic, obsessive-compulsive disorders, and spiritual issues secondary to other clinical concerns. His theoretical approach to therapy is functional contextualism and favors ACT, exposure therapies (PE, exposure and response prevention), compassion-focused therapy, and other similar cognitive, behavioral, and

mindfulness-based approaches. When there is free time, he enjoys playing guitar, collecting guitar pedals (an obscure but seemingly-never-ending hobby), gardening, and cooking up new culinary creations.

Y'Londa Mitchell, Ph.D. (Primary Care Mental Health Integration-John

Cochran) Dr. Y'Londa Mitchell was born and raised in Shreveport, Louisiana while spending much of her adolescence in St. Louis, Missouri. She earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in business, human resources and clinical mental health counseling. She earned a PhD in Counseling Psychology from Tennessee State University and completed her predoctoral training at the Columbia VA Healthcare System in Columbia, South Carolina where she specialized in Trauma Recovery-MST, Suicide Prevention and Primary Care Mental Health Integration. During this time she also completed VA certification for Cognitive Processing Therapy. Prior to joining the VA staff she worked as a licensed professional counselor in community mental health, school based mental health and private practice. Dr. Mitchell is also a US Army, Operation Iraqi Freedom Veteran during which she served as an enlisted soldier. She credits this experience to one of her passions in the mental health field as well as being a first generation college student. Her professional interests are grief and loss, religion and spirituality, trauma recovery, program evaluation, supervision and training and culturally informed treatment. She has published in the areas of psychology in the schools, childhood adversity and trauma recovery. She is also a registered yoga teacher for kids and adults and maintains independent private practices focused on consultation, speaking, supervision, counseling and wellness practices. She is deeply involved in many veteran and civilian organizations in the community. She is a strong advocate for mental health literacy, integrative approaches to health/wellbeing, and serving those communities that are often disempowered and excluded from resources. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her close friends and family, writing books and journals, volunteering, and speaking at events local and nationwide as a way to bring public awareness to mental health beyond an office.

Catherine Morrison, Ph.D. (Local Recovery Coordinator) Dr. Morrison grew up in New Mexico among the wild things. She earned her bachelor's degree from New Mexico State University. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. from The University of Tulsa. Her graduate school research training was in personality assessment, particularly MMPI-2-RF PSY-5. Dr. Morrison completed her internship at the St. Louis VA. Dr. Morrison completed her postdoctoral residency at the New Mexico VA Healthcare System in Albuquerque with an emphasis in Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Systems Redesign. While in Albuquerque, she ate as many tortillas as humanly possible and stockpiled green chile and salsa before returning to St. Louis where she worked at WashU Medical School. Dr. Morrison is the Local Recovery Coordinator (LRC) for VASTLHCS. One of her primary missions is to answer the questions that keep VA employees awake at night, "What IS an LRC? Like, what do you do?" When she's not answering those burning questions, Dr. Morrison is probably talking about the magnificence of dogs, tacos, traveling or making nerdy references to Harry Potter, Game of Thrones or Lord of the Rings.

Perri Navarro, Ph.D. (Primary Care Mental Health Integration) Dr. Navarro was born in Chicago and grew up in small-town Kentucky (Hodgenville, where Abraham Lincoln was born). She attended a tiny college in the cornfields of Iowa (Grinnell College, if you're interested) where she earned her B.A. in Psychology in 2011. She moved to St. Louis to earn her Ph.D. in clinical psychology (with a graduate certificate in gerontology) from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and completed clinical psychology internship and geropsychology residency at the St. Louis VA. She was fortunate to be able to stick around at the St. Louis VA as a staff psychologist within Primary Care-Mental Health Integration and functions as a member of the primary care teams at the North County CBOC as well as Saint Charles CBOC. Dr. Navarro's clinical interests include geropsychology, existential issues, ACT and interpersonal therapeutic approaches, as well as health psychology. In her spare time (if there is any to be had), she enjoys hanging out with her family (husband, toddler daughter, infant son), hiking, or reading a good book. She also loves to spend time with her enormous goofball of a German Shepherd and ride her horse, Dakota, who is happily much better behaved than her dog (and only slightly larger).

Shawn O'Connor, Ph.D. (Specialty Mental Health Programs Manager) Dr. O'Connor received his B.A. in Psychology from Webster University in St. Louis, MO, where he initially pursued a degree in philosophy, but decided to change his emphasis to a field that might conceivably lead to some form of employment. Armed with a B.A. from a liberal arts university, he did what anyone would do, which is to work with persons who were unhoused, and who had serious mental disorders for a few years, and then went on to pursue his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology in 2008 at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, working under Dr. Resick, of CPT fame, among others. There, he studied diagnostic issues pertaining to religion and psychosis, and had a lot of experience with trauma during his graduate years, but has successfully overcome the frequent flashbacks thanks to the help of his emotional support manatee, Gertrude. He did his internship and postdoctoral work at VA St. Louis Health Care System and called "dibs" on one of the offices before anyone else understood this was legally binding. Administration determined it may be more cost-effective to hire him than to hire a pest removal service, and so they just put him in charge of Specialty Mental Health Services. He is also one of the two VISN 15 PTSD Mentors, spreading his cockamamie ideas on PTSD treatment in the VA throughout the region. Dr. O'Connor also spends a great deal of time in soundproofed basements, but that's because he is a drummer, not whatever it is that you were thinking.

Crista Montgomery Ortals, Psy.D. (Substance Abuse Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program- SARRTP) Dr. Ortals was raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. She completed a double major in Psychology and Sociology (with a minor in Biology) at the University of Dayton. She went on to obtain her master's and doctorate at Indiana State University. While there, she completed practicums at the university's psychology clinic and a local community mental health center. During graduate school, she continued to feed her passion for volunteering and was active in the local community center for low-income families and in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. Dr. Ortals relocated to St. Louis in 2007 for internship at the St. Louis Psychology Internship Consortium. The

internship offered clinical experiences with Jewish Family Services outpatient clinic and inpatient experiences with children and adults at Department of Mental Health (DMH) facilities. Dr. Ortals continued working with DMH in their forensic long-term facilities following internship until joining the VA SAR RTP in January 2022. Along with the interdisciplinary SAR RTP team, Dr. Ortals provides both residential (3 weeks) and intensive outpatient services (4 weeks) to veterans seeking recovery from substance use disorders. She is in the beginning stages of a collaborative research project with five other VAs in developing personality-focused interventions for substance use disorders. Outside of work, Dr. Ortals's time is mostly filled with raising her 3 children and 2 dogs with her husband. In addition to her interest in all things psychology and wellness, she enjoys opportunities to be silly (Halloween is a favorite!), crafting, and home projects.

Whitney Pierce, Psy.D. (Whole Health Clinical Director) Dr. Pierce is originally an Okie from Muskogee, where she led a previous life as a registered nurse. Her psychology career began with a BA from Northeastern State University in 2009 followed by a doctorate from Wright State University's School of Professional Psychology. Merging past experiences and future goals, she completed a Health Psychology internship at Central Arkansas VA in 2014 and stayed on for an interdisciplinary postdoctoral fellowship. In 2015 she joined the staff at VA Tennessee Valley where she worked as part of the pain clinic team and supervised rotations for psychology and pharmacy trainees. Always eager to champion empirically supported mind-body care, she has completed VA EBP training in CBT-CP and SST, NCP training in MI, earned board certification in biofeedback training, and holds certifications as a yoga teacher and wheelchair-based tai chi instructor. As a life-long Cardinals fan and equally fervent advocate of CIH, she happily joined the STL VA Whole Health team in 2019. In her initial role as their Health Behavior Coordinator and current position as director, her focus is provider education on MI and WH approaches and delivering care that integrates psychotherapy and complementary interventions. Nationally, she serves as the Biofeedback Champion for the VA Office of Patient Centered Care & Cultural Transformation's Integrated Health Coordinating Center and a consultant for the CBT-CP EBP Training Program. Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her husband and playing never-ending games of fetch and frisbee with her very energetic border collie.

Abigail E. Ramon, Ph.D. (Primary Care Mental Health Integration-John Cochran and ComPACT) Dr. Ramon joined the psychology team at the VA St. Louis in 2020, working in the Primary Care-Mental Health Integration program (PCMHI) and in the ComPACT clinic, a specialty primary care team for medically complex patients. Dr. Ramon also conducts research focused on complementary and integrative health (CIH) interventions for veteran well-being and for primary care settings. Dr. Ramon completed her B.A. in psychology at Lindenwood University (2008) in St. Charles, MO. She received her M.S. in clinical-counseling psychology from Illinois State University (2012) in Normal, IL, and her Ph.D. in counseling psychology from Tennessee State University (2018). She completed her pre-doctoral internship at the Harry S. Truman VA in Columbia, MO and her post-doctoral training with the VA Mental Illness Research,

Education and Clinical Centers of Excellence (MIRECC) program and the VA Center for Integrated Healthcare. Dr. Ramon's clinical and research interests are in health psychology, integrated care, and integrative medicine applications for illness and well-being, with a focus on traumatic stress and chronic pain.

Chelsea Raterman, Ph.D. (Trauma Recovery Program) Dr. Raterman grew up in Arlington, Texas and received her B.S. in Psychology from Fordham University in the Bronx, NY. After spending those years running around and thoroughly enjoying New York City, she wandered over to the Midwest and received her Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. While at UMSL, she trained at the Center for Trauma Recovery, working extensively with survivors of interpersonal violence who have been diagnosed with PTSD. Her interest in trauma recovery continued as she completed a trauma-focused internship at the James A. Haley VA in Tampa, FL where she received additional training in combat-related PTSD and MST. She completed a postdoctoral residency at the Baltimore VA with an emphasis in working with Returning Veterans. After completing residency, she assisted with developing a dual-diagnosis PTSD/SUD IOP at the Perry Point VA in Maryland. She then happily returned to St. Louis and serves on TRP. Her interests include program development, balancing flexibility of EBP protocols while maintaining fidelity, and how various factors of treatment engagement in an EBP predict treatment outcome. When not at work, she loves spending time with her husband and pets, rooting for the Dallas Cowboys (aka repeatedly saying this is the year we'll get another Super Bowl victory and then being thoroughly disappointed!), hiking, trying new restaurants, and traveling.

Nathalie Rieder, Psy.D. (Mental Health- Aging Resources Team) Dr. Rieder hails from Richmond, VA. She completed her B.A. in Music at the University of Mary Washington in 2012 (clarinet—think Squidward, but with SpongeBob temperament). After reading the great works of neurologist Oliver Sacks, she developed an interest in the aging brain. She completed her B.S. in Psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2013 and her Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) in 2020, where she received training in primary care psychology, geropsychology, and neuropsychology. She did her internship at the Tuscaloosa VAMC (2020) and her postdoctoral fellowship in outpatient geropsychology at the Milwaukee VAMC (2021). Although she thoroughly enjoyed moving around the country during the pandemic, Dr. Rieder decided to finally settle down in St. Louis and joined the JB Mental Health Clinic team in 2021. Her theoretical orientation is eclectic, using primarily cognitive-behavioral interventions, and her clinical interests include geropsychology, neurocognitive disorders, caregiver well-being, grief and bereavement, and death and dying. Outside of work, Dr. Rieder enjoys refamiliarizing herself with piano and clarinet, thrifting and farmer market-ing, and watching cooking shows to help support her husband's continued growth as her personal chef.

Martina K. Ritchhart, Ph.D. (Chief of Psychology) Dr. Ritchhart attended Oklahoma State University and interned at the Tucson VA where she focused on health psychology. After internship she completed her postdoctoral hours working on a mobile acute crisis team. Although a slow study, she eventually learned to use the correct 10-

codes on a police radio [It's bad to call in your 10-23 (location) and indicate that you are 10-41 (drunk)]. She learned the culture of the Sonoran Desert, both the people and the wildlife, and to this day is wary about both wild javelinas and turning her backside toward Jumping Cholla cacti (which it turns out, are aptly named). While still in Arizona she served as faculty for the Southern Arizona Internship Consortium, worked with the Southern Arizona Psychological Association board, and opened a private practice. After relocating to Southwest Illinois in 2006, she got her chance to return to the VA as one of the first two Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) psychologists. One of her greatest joys was working with psychology interns and residents as the past training director. She currently serves on the facility LGBT committee, facility Employee Threat Assessment Team (ETAT), and Whole Health Integrative Care Champion. Her theoretical approaches are cognitive-behavioral and cross-cultural, and her clinical work is primarily in EBP and Ericksonian-informed medical hypnosis. She has a diverse extended family, loves anything that has to do with water, and would gladly practice Spanish and Amharic language with anyone. With that in mind, to all the new trainees: Bienvenido! & Enkwandenametah!

Marianne Rizk, Ph.D. (Health Behavior Coordinator, Health Promotion-Disease Prevention) Dr. Rizk was born and raised in Memphis, TN, where she walked regularly without blue suede shoes. Her educational journey took her to “The North,” aka St. Louis, where she completed her Bachelor’s in Psychology at Washington University. Eager to learn what it would be like to live in the middle of a cornfield, she matriculated at the University of Iowa and earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology. But after failing to register a single hit in the field of dreams, she returned to the VA St. Louis Health Care System to complete both her internship and postdoctoral residency, followed by happily accepting her staff position as Health Behavior Coordinator under Health Promotion-Disease Prevention. Clinically, Dr. Rizk conducts smoking cessation groups, psychosocial pre-surgical evaluations for organ transplant and bariatric surgery, and individual psychotherapy for disordered eating. She spends her free time watching far too much reality television and chasing her two young children.

Marva M. Robinson, Psy.D. (Primary Care- North County) Dr. Marva M. Robinson completed her undergraduate studies at Saint Louis University, graduating with magnum cum laude honors. She pursued her doctoral studies in Clinical Psychology at Nova Southeastern University where she graduated with a specialization in Forensics and a focus in Child, Adolescent and Family Psychology. She is a partner in a private practice which provides training, workshops, consultation on topics pertaining to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Dr. Marva Robinson is the past President of the St. Louis Chapter of The Association of Black Psychologist, an organization focused on addressing the mental health needs of people of the African Diaspora. Dr. Robinson worked with colleagues in St. Louis to address the acute crisis needs of the Ferguson and greater St. Louis community. Dr. Robinson has worked for and consulted with community health care agencies, state psychiatric facilities, in corrections, for hospitals and in private practice with diverse populations. She is often consulted by media outlets for her community expertise. Dr. Robinson also serves as an adjunct professor for Webster University in the Department of Educations since 2017. When not advocating

for cultural competency and equity, she puts forth all her efforts in keeping her 11-year-old son, Preston, from picking up strange looking insects, and climbing trees.

Christina Ross, Psy.D. (C&P) Dr. Ross grew up in the St. Louis, MO. In the 4 years it took her to earn her B.A. in Psychology, Criminal Justice and Accounting she attended 4 different colleges/universities in and around the St. Louis area, and one in New York, before graduating from Lindenwood University in 2006. She settled in at the University of Indianapolis for her doctorate, where she earned her Psy.D. in 2006. Dr. Ross' research interests focused on child and adolescent psychology and PTSD in children affected by crime. She spent the next 5 years in Joplin, MO building a group private practice and working with the National Health Service Corps in areas of high need for psychologists. After the Joplin tornado, she and her husband decided to move their family back to the St. Louis area. Dr. Ross joined a group private practice for a short time before taking a contracting position with the United States Air Force working in the Mental Health Clinic at Scott Air Force Base. Dr. Ross quickly learned how rewarding working with Veterans can be and started considering positions with the VA. In 2016 a position with the VA became available at Scott AFB in the C&P clinic, which was the perfect fit for her at that point in her career. Dr. Ross' theoretical orientation is based on CBT interventions with an eclectic approach to therapy.

Keisha Ross, Ph.D. is a Staff Psychologist at St. Louis VA, Mental Health Clinic-John Cochran). Prior to joining the St. Louis VA staff, she has practiced in school based, independent, community mental health, and corrections settings. Her specialty areas include: treating and understanding complex trauma, racial/ethnic diversity intersection with other identities (e.g., religion/spirituality, sexual orientation, gender, etc.), as well as leadership and advocacy. Dr. Ross leads Minority Stress Resilience (MSR) Groups, working with Veterans of Color, focused on treating race-based stress/trauma (RBST). She also co-leads a national Innovation Grant focused on providing consultation based training for providers on RBST protocol; as well as a local grant focused on improving health communication between providers and racially/ethnically diverse patients. She serves as Co- Chair to the Psychology Cultural Competency (C3) Committee, and provides preceptee supervision for psychology interns. She is inaugural recipient of the first Advancing Diversity in Psychology Award (2020) and 2021 ADIP awardee. Dr. Ross' professional affiliations and membership include American Psychological Association (APA); Missouri Psychological Association (MOPA); and local St. Louis Chapter of the Association of Black Psychologists (ABPsi). Dr. Ross is Past President of MOPA (2017-2018), and founding Chairperson of MOPA's Diversity Committee. Her theoretical orientation for individual psychotherapy is integrative including multiculturalism, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and psychodynamic-based theories; as well as implementation of other evidence based treatments, including cognitive processing therapy (CPT) and mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR). Dr. Ross leads the Minority Stress Resilience (MSR) Group, working with Veterans of Color, focused on treating race based stress/trauma (RBST). Dr. Ross maintains small independent practice focused on conducting psychological evaluations for children and adults; as well as parenting assessments and expert testimony child custody evaluations. She also is Adjunct Faculty at Saint Louis University. Dr. Ross

provides regional, national, and international trainings on diversity and cultural competence with an emphasis on the impacts of historical/intergenerational trauma on communities of color. She volunteers in the community for faith based organizations providing psychoeducation on mental health to faith leaders, to assist in decreasing stigma among the religious/spiritual population. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, spending time with her family, bike riding, gardening, and practicing holistic healing, such as Reiki and Aromatherapy

Sarah Shia, Ph.D., ABPP (Mental Health Clinic-Jefferson Barracks) Dr. Shia grew up in upstate New York and received a BA from the University of Rochester. She then attended Washington, DC's Catholic University of America, returning to Rochester for internship in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Rochester Medical School. She completed a PhD in Clinical Psychology in 2001, moved to St. Louis in 2003 and began her position with the VA, in the Mental Health Clinic, in 2007. She is currently the Local Evidence Based Psychotherapy Coordinator and is board certified in Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology. Dr. Shia is a VISN 15 trainer for Cognitive Processing Therapy and also is a VA provider in Interpersonal Psychotherapy, Prolonged Exposure, and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy. She lives with her husband, three children, and sweet mutt in St. Louis County.

Veronica L. Shead, Ph.D. (Work Place Violence Prevention Program Manager/ Palliative Care) Dr. Shead returned to her hometown of St. Louis after serving as the Psychologist in Geriatrics and Palliative Care at the Audie L. Murphy VA Medical Center in San Antonio, TX. Prior to serving in South Texas, she worked at the Memphis VA Medical Center as a pain psychologist where she also completed her fellowship in Medical Health Psychology with a focus on late life. She completed her internship training in Clinical Neuropsychology at the University of Arizona Medical Center and received her PhD from Washington University in St. Louis with a focus on Neuropsychology and Aging. Dr. Shead has been very involved in geriatric and palliative care training and supervision within psychology and across disciplines. She has pursued involvement with national VA programs and serves on the STAR-VA leadership team, the National Mental Health Cultural Humility workgroup, and the Race Based Stress and Minority Resilience Leadership team. Within the community, she served on the Board of the San Antonio and South Texas Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, was Secretary for the Society of Geropsychology (APA Div. 12-II), and was a member of the APA End-of-Life workgroup. She is currently the President-elect of the Council of Geropsychology Training Programs and is co-facilitator for the Association of VA Psychologist Leaders, Psychologists of Color and Allies monthly National Call. Dr. Shead also maintains clinical and research interests in late life issues, specifically: palliative care, integrated care and training, dementia assessment and treatment, as well as how these areas interface with health disparities and their effects on minorities and older adults. She has published on related topics and presented at numerous local, national, and international conferences. She was a 2020-2021 Health and Aging Policy Fellow with a placement in the office of Senator Michael Bennet's Health Policy team. In her on-going pursuit of balance and self-care, Dr.

Shed enjoys traveling around the world, running, concerts, eating, and spending time with her pack of rescue dogs along with the rest of her family.

Rebecca A. Stout, Ph.D. (Interdisciplinary Pain Management Program/Rural Interprofessional Faculty Development Initiative (RIFDI) VA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) Dr. Stout completed her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology with a specialization in health psychology from Wayne State University in 2008. After completing further training in health psychology during internship at the Henry Ford Health Sciences Center and post-doc she joined the clinical faculty in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Illinois-Chicago. During this time she was able to develop expertise in consultation-liaison services, management of chronic disease, and bariatric surgery evaluation. After joining the St. Louis VA in 2013, she has been able to continue to develop her interest in health psychology with positions in Health Promotion Disease Prevention and Primary Care Mental Health Integration. In her current role in the Interdisciplinary Pain Rehabilitation Program she enjoys assisting Veterans to improve their self-management of chronic pain through use of evidenced based interventions. In January 2020 she joined the VA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA) in the role of project manager for the Rural Interprofessional Faculty Development Initiative (RIFDI) where she implements a national program to build and improve training opportunities at rural VAs. She also serves as a consultant and trainer for the VA Motivational Interviewing initiative. Dr. Stout spends her off time exploring St. Louis with her young family and traveling back to her home state of Michigan.

Ruth Davies Sulser, Ph.D. (Assistant Chief of Psychology and Behavioral Health). Dr. Davies Sulser received her Ph.D. in 1988 from Washington University in St. Louis, MO, in Clinical Psychology with an emphasis in Aging. She spent several years working in Behavioral Medicine and then spent four years on the faculty at the University of Missouri, St. Louis before moving to the VA in 1993. She has published in the areas of cognitive/behavioral treatments of insomnia and depression, mental health and aging, and health promotion among older adults. She maintains strong interests in adaptation to age-associated change among older adults particularly after moving her 90 year old father to Missouri. Clinically, she provides individual and couple's therapy Polytrauma/TBI Clinic and covers for other staff in the PCMH/Behavioral Health programs. Transplanted from the West Coast, she can also tell you all the reasons why baseball is better in the mid-west, and she is always looking for a great novel to read or trail to hike. She's the parent of two, one who is trying to be the 21st century Ross from "Friends" (PhD in Paleontology at the American Museum of Natural History) and the other who is "re-leafing" the urban canopy with a not-for-profit tree nursery in St. Louis.

Désirée A. Sutherland, Ph.D. (Mental Health Clinic – JB, Assessment psychologist) Dr. Sutherland grew up in Baton Rouge, LA where she was trained from an early age to wrestle alligators and enormous river-dwelling catfish. The courageous spirit that she developed through these formative life experiences allowed her to undertake the questionable course of attending graduate school, and she received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology (specialization in Trauma Studies/PTSD) from the University of Missouri – St. Louis in 2011. Dr. Sutherland completed her internship at

the Bruce W. Carter VAMC in Miami, FL and her residency at the VA St. Louis HCS (PTSD specialization). Since then Dr. Sutherland has continued to work as a psychologist at the VA St. Louis HCS in various roles including C&P Examiner and MST Coordinator. She is currently working at the JB MHC and offers personality, attentional, differential diagnostic, and educational assessment services. Through both her training and professional experiences Dr. Sutherland has acquired extensive experience with trauma-focused psychotherapy, focused clinical interviewing, and the VA claims process. In her spare time Dr. Sutherland enjoys hanging out with friends, being an enormous geek, and wrangling her two ridiculously adorable welsh corgis. She also dabbles in a variety of creative pursuits such as costuming, dance, and graphic art.

Melissa Turkel, Ph.D. (Mental Health Clinic-John Cochran). Dr. Turkel grew up in Atlanta, Georgia. She attended college at Washington University in St. Louis, with a double major in Psychology and Philosophy-Neuroscience-Psychology (2013). She stayed in St. Louis to complete her doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Missouri – St. Louis (2019), during which she completed a practicum at the St. Louis VA. Dr. Turkel completed her pre-doctoral internship and post-doctoral fellowship at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa, Florida. Both her internship and fellowship were on a trauma-focused track, with an emphasis in military sexual trauma. She returned to St. Louis in 2020 following her postdoc and gladly joined the Mental Health Clinic. Dr. Turkel's therapy approach is primarily cognitive-behavioral and rooted in evidence based practice, and she has completed VA EBP training in CPT and PE. She specializes in treating Veterans with PTSD, anxiety and depressive disorders, and borderline personality disorder. Outside of work, Dr. Turkel enjoys spending time with family and watching Netflix.

Jessica Vanderlan Ph.D. (Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes Jewish Hospital and Washington University) Dr. Vanderlan grew up in upstate New York and Ohio. She attended the University of Michigan, graduating in 2004 with a B.A. in French. After college she headed to Los Angeles where she spent the next 11 years enjoying everything that the city and beaches have to offer. While working in corporate America, she began volunteering at For the Child, a non-profit organization in Long Beach, CA as a member of the CART (child abuse response team). She worked with families and children in the hospital immediately after disclosure of sexual abuse. She found this very rewarding and it peaked her interest in working with individuals through crises. In 2010, she began attending California School of Professional Psychology with a focus in clinical health psychology. After her first practicum working with a patient through cancer and end of life, she recognized this as an area of interest. Her next practicum was at Simms/Mann - UCLA Center for Integrative Oncology. The experiences working with patients through the cancer continuum in various settings as well as the mentorship she received made it clear that psycho-oncology was the place for her. She completed her internship at UCLA - Semel Institute and continued her focus in oncology. Dr. Vanderlan received her Ph.D. in 2015 and moved from LA to St. Louis for the post-doctoral fellow position at Siteman Cancer Center. After fellowship she was hired as a full-time psychologist at Siteman at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University. She enjoys clinical work with patients and caregivers, consultation with

medical teams, teaching at the medical school, research, and supervision and mentorship with focus on self-care. Her theoretical orientation is integrated, typically using ACT, CBT, interpersonal, and existential interventions. She is still exploring St. Louis and enjoys dining out, going to the Fox, a regular yoga practice, and planning to finally adopt a dog.

Theresa M. Van Iseghem, Psy.D. (Whole Health) Dr. Van Iseghem is the resident Hippie of the psychology tribe (don't tell Dr. Dalton). A St. Louis native, she spent much of her younger years people watching on the Delmar Loop, writing angsty, grunge inspired, poetry, and working in her family owned catering business. As the youngest of seven, she became a systems therapist by proxy and eventually went on to make a career with equal parts of all the above – or something of the sort. In truth, Dr. Van Iseghem was born with a passion for helping people. Despite her blue-collar roots, she stayed course and made her own path into the clinical world. Dr. Van Iseghem's path to becoming a psychologist was of the less traditional sort and life experience has always been her first teacher. Her educational training started with a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Southern Illinois University @ Edwardsville in 2000 and then a combined Master's and Doctoral Degree from Forest Institute of Professional Psychology in Clinical Psychology in 2007. As part of her graduate training, she completed a Post-graduate certification in Marriage and Family Therapy and wrote her dissertation on the changing dynamics of the American family system. Residency shifted the focus of her interests to neuropsychology and understanding brain development and the impact of prenatal and postnatal traumatic stress exposure on the developing brain. After two years as a post-doctoral fellow with Childrens' Research Triangle and Southern Illinois Healthcare Foundation, Dr. Van Iseghem transitioned into private practice and into the VHA as a contract psychologist within the Compensation and Pension Department. This proved to be an invaluable induction into the VHA and added depth to her explorations of traumatic stress exposure on brain formation and disease development. In 2012, Dr. Van Iseghem moved into Primary Care Mental Health Integration in the St. Charles CBOC running what a previous intern dubbed, "her own small mental health clinic" on account of the fact that no veteran wants to cross the Missouri River...ever. During her years in the CBOC, Dr. Van Iseghem spearheaded the use of Shared Medical Appointments for treatment of T2DM and was the recipient of two innovation grants emphasizing healing environments, the most recent of which will reshape the clinic waiting room to incorporate aspects of mindfulness into the design. In 2018, she accepted the position of Psychologist in the Whole Health Program and is anxiously awaiting her transition into this new role where she will bring back her hippie roots ~ advocating for the integration of complimentary treatment modalities as effective aspects of clinical practice. Dr. Van Iseghem is a 200 hour registered yoga teacher; she is provisionally certified in Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction and in the next year will seek certification in CBT for Chronic Pain, Biofeedback, and Medical Hypnosis. As part of Whole Health, Dr. Van Iseghem works with an integrated care team targeting chronic pain, autoimmune disease, and other complex biopsychosocial conditions that incorporate the mind body connection.

Sarah K. Wahl, Ph.D. (Interdisciplinary Pain Clinic-JB) Dr. Wahl was born and raised in St. Louis, MO. She moved to the big city of Chicago where she obtained her B.S. and B.A. at Loyola University. She earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Illinois at Chicago with an emphasis in health psychology. After getting tired of the long, cold winters and inability to find parking spots, she moved back to St. Louis where she was fortunate to match at the St. Louis VA for pre-doctoral internship. Dr. Wahl completed both her pre-doctoral internship and postdoctoral residency at the St. Louis VA. She joined the Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) team in 2007. She transitioned to a contract VA employee conducting Compensation & Pension assessments between 2014 – 2020. She recently rejoined the Psychology staff in 2020 as a member of the Interdisciplinary Pain Clinic. When Dr. Wahl is not being challenged with exciting cases at the VA, she is busy at home with her 4 children and sports-fanatic husband. Dr. Wahl enjoys exercising, spending time with family and friends, and traveling. She has learned the difference between a trip and a vacation, and she longs for a vacation without any parental responsibilities! She also has a slight addiction to chocolate, but she is still in the pre-contemplative (aka denial) stage of change for this dietary behavior.

Ryan Walsh, Ph.D. (Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans) Dr. Walsh was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. As a Wisconsinite, Dr. Walsh developed deep love for cheese, the Green Bay Packers, Milwaukee Brewers, and other fine Wisconsin products. He completed his BA in Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in 2005, and moved to St. Louis in 2006 to begin his graduate training. Dr. Walsh received his Ph.D. through the University of Missouri-St. Louis in 2012, after having successfully completed his internship at the VA St. Louis Health Care System (where he also completed his postdoctoral training with the PTSD Clinical Teams). He joined the St. Louis VA as a staff psychologist in August of 2013. He has served in numerous clinics, and most recently (since 2016) he has served as the full-time psychologist in the Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans (DCHV) program. He has various interests, though enjoys spending most of his spare time with his loved ones.

Clara Wiegman, Psy.D. (Primary Care Mental Health Integration-Jefferson Barracks) Dr. Wiegman is a St. Louis native. She received her B.A. in Psychology from Webster University, where she originally pursued a degree in Piano Performance, but soon realized she liked people, and fresh air, too much to spend 8+ hours a day practicing. She earned her Psy.D. in Clinical Psychology from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio. Having been landlocked all her life, Dr. Wiegman was thrilled to move to the beach for the year and completed her predoctoral internship at the Miami VA. She served as a psychologist on the acute inpatient units at Dorothea Dix State Hospital in Raleigh for 2 years prior to accepting a position as the PTSD-SUD specialist in Fayetteville, NC. After 3 years in this role, Dr. Wiegman transitioned into the role of Trauma Recovery Program (TRP) coordinator. Her predominant theoretical orientation is cognitive behavioral, and she is certified in PST, PE, CBT-I and CBT-CP. She currently serves as the Chair of Psychology Practice Council. Dr. Wiegman is a member of the JB PACT for Transgender healthcare. She is excited to be back home and part of the psychology staff at the St. Louis VA.

Daniel Wilkinson, Ph.D., MBA (Outpatient Mental Health) Dr. Wilkinson was first interested in psychology as a child after perusing his father's textbooks. While working on his Ph.D. in clinical psychology at Ohio University, he developed interests in medical psychology and consultation with physicians--starting on internship at the Cincinnati VAMC. Following his graduate training, Dr. Wilkinson began work with seriously mentally ill patients in a forensic setting. Dr. Wilkinson later served as a civilian staff psychologist for the Air Force. In this setting, Dr. Wilkinson performed command-directed evaluations, consulting with commanders about active duty members' fitness for duty and about factors that could impact adjudication of disciplinary and administrative issues. He also provided a full range of psychological services to the active duty population, receiving formal training in prolonged exposure to better serve them. From there, Dr. Wilkinson joined the St. Louis VA and began work in PCMHI, ultimately working at both campuses, an annex and a CBOC. During this span, he supervised postdoctoral residents, interns and practicum students. Dr. Wilkinson now serves as Assistant Program Manager of Outpatient Mental Health. When not on the job, Dr. Wilkinson takes great pride in teaching his children to be nice to the family mascots: "Petey the Chiweenie," his new sibling "Moose the Ballistic Moosle," a very talkative parakeet and two geckos. When not corralling (being corralled by?) the pets and 3 kids, he is probably engaged in nerdy gaming hobbies or annoying his wife with really loud music.

Kelsey Wilson, Ph.D. (Polytrauma/TBI Clinic) Dr. Wilson grew up in northwest Missouri. She earned her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Truman State University, a small liberal arts college in rural Missouri. Not yet ready to leave the comfort of the cornfields, she attended the University of Iowa and completed her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, with an emphasis in Neuropsychology. She then returned to Missouri to complete her internship and residency in Neuropsychology at the St. Louis VA Health Care System. Having always had a strong interest in the integration of assessment and intervention, Dr. Wilson was thrilled to join the staff as the Polytrauma Psychologist/Neuropsychologist. Dr. Wilson provides neuropsychological assessments and individual therapy for Veterans with traumatic brain injuries. She also leads cognitive rehabilitation groups as part of an interdisciplinary team with Speech Pathology. Her theoretical approach is eclectic but she typically favors ACT and behavioral approaches. In her free time, you can find her drinking copious amounts of coffee, enjoying time outdoors, and trying to keep up with her toddler.

Attachment 1: Psychology Performance Improvement, Remediation & Grievance Policy



**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VA St. Louis Health Care System
#1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
St. Louis, MO 63125-4199**

In reply refer to: 116B/JB

Memorandum

RE: Psychology Training Performance Improvement, Remediation & Grievance Policy

I. Purpose: This memorandum outlines the VA St. Louis Health Care System psychology training program's due process policies on problematic trainee performance. This memorandum is intended only to improve the internal management of the VA St. Louis Health Care System Psychology Training Program and is not intended to, and does not, create any right to administrative or judicial review, or any other right, substantive or procedural, enforceable by a party against the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, its officers or employees, or any other person.

II. Overview: It is the intention of the training program to foster the growth and development of interns and postdoctoral residents during their training assignments. We strive to create a learning context within which trainees can examine, and improve upon all aspects of their professional functioning. Supervisors and preceptors should work with trainees to identify both strengths and problem areas or deficiencies as early in the year as possible so as to be able to develop a plan with the trainee and build upon their strengths. Trainees are encouraged to ask for, and supervisors are encouraged to give, feedback on a continuous basis.

We strive to accomplish the goals of training in a collaborative manner and have a process designed to help support professional growth and development. However, we have the ethical responsibility and are required to exercise our professional and supervisory judgment to appropriately assess trainee's achievements in competency and conduct for the benefit of the public consumer and the discipline of psychology. We will only graduate those trainees who are able to meet minimum levels of achievement in training (as specified in our evaluation forms and materials) and who demonstrate professional conduct in every aspect of their clinical work and employment. To facilitate this process, our program offers preceptors (who function as mentors as well as supervisors to interns), utilizes the Trainee Evaluation Form at the mid-rotation point and two weeks prior to the end of each rotation for identification of growth areas, and facilitates ongoing communication between the Training Council, supervisory staff, and the intern's graduate program's Directors of Training (where deemed necessary).

III. Policy: It is the policy of our program to make every effort to assist trainees in developing sufficient clinical and professional competencies. However, if the Training Council identifies deficits in these areas, or violations in conduct according to the terms of their employment, or if there is insufficient improvement or resolution of problematic behaviors, the Training Council will fail the trainee on either the rotation or the entire training program. Either or both of these determinations could result in the trainee being terminated from the training program. Such circumstances would be highly unusual in our program and would typically occur after the implementation of procedures detailed herein.

Please note that Psychology Interns and Psychology Residents are appointed pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 7405(a)(1)(A) and may be terminated at any time without review.

IV. Definition of Problems in Trainee Performance: Problematic trainee behavior, although rare, is most often identified in areas such as employment disciplinary problems, conduct performance problems, clinical performance problems, or extra-psychology staff allegations. Training performance problems may cover a range of issues and behaviors. They are typically first identified when the nature of a trainee's behavior, attitude, or certain negative performance characteristics exceed what would be reasonably expected as part of the developmental process in training. Concerns about potentially problematic behavior presented by any person, at any time, through informal or formal channels, may be reviewed and considered for address. Any concerns regarding performance will receive initial review and consideration by the Training Director (or designee). This review will result in a determination as to whether the reported concerns warrant the lowest level of intervention (such as watchful monitoring) or are best addressed through other methods, such as education, skills development, or formal remediation.

A. Employment disciplinary problems: Such disciplinary problems include issues involving the trainee's conduct as a VA employee and involve various basic responsibilities which are outlined in the Employee Handbook and are governed by guidelines of federal employment. These include, but are not limited to, the trainee's responsibility to faithfully fulfill the duties of their job description, to be at work during scheduled tour of duty unless properly excused on leave, to avoid conflicts of interest, to protect and conserve government property, to avoid use of intoxicating substances that may impair duties, and to follow drug free workplace policies.

B. Conduct performance problems: Conduct problems may include, but are not limited to, behaviors which demonstrate a lack of professional comportment with staff or patients, behaviors which interfere with the training program's administrative efforts (such as accessing your training file without permission or withholding documentation or paperwork necessary to demonstrate training efforts), or behavior which seems to mislead supervisors or training leadership regarding your activities during your tour of duty. Perceived harassing, threatening, or hostile behavior or action toward other trainees or toward staff will not be tolerated. These, as well as general patterns of interpersonal interactions which are overly or persistently negative in nature, will be reviewed by the Training Council and brought to the attention of the Chief of Psychology.

C. Clinical performance problems: Clinical performance problems include, but are not limited to, identified deficiencies in therapeutic assessment, conceptualization, treatment, documentation, and consultation where a trainee demonstrates a current level of skill below what would reasonably be expected at their training level (internship or residency) in the judgment of their clinical supervisor or the reviewing Training Council members. Such identified concerns may warrant alterations to Learning Agreements, specific training or educational activities, or additional supervision strategies or remediation in order to assist the trainee in reaching acceptable levels of clinical competency.

D. Extra-psychology staff allegations: Any medical center employee, patient, or individual connected to a patient in a meaningful way (e.g., family, caretaker, etc.) may file a complaint against a trainee. Examples of such violations may be, but are not limited to, ethical or legal violations of professional standards or laws; or failure to satisfy professional obligations that violate the rights, privileges, or responsibilities of others. Should a complaint be filed:

- 1) The Training Director and Training Council will review the complaint and take appropriate action.
- 2) If the Training Council determines that significant problematic behavior(s) has been identified, the Council will review the case and follow those procedures outlined in the following section. This will occur in addition to any other review or investigation required by law or regulation.

Other examples of problematic behaviors that would necessitate review by Training Council include:

- 1) The quality of the services delivered by the trainee is evaluated as deficient and does not meet defined competency standards.
- 2) Failing to meet minimum levels of competency identified on learning agreements or evaluations.
- 3) Inability to comply with appropriate standards of professional conduct.
- 4) Failure to follow the APA ethical guidelines for psychologists.
- 5) Problematic relationships or problematic interpersonal interactions with supervisors, peers or other staff including overly hostile, argumentative, and verbally or physically threatening behavior.
- 6) Inability and/or unwillingness to acquire and integrate professional standards into one's repertoire of professional behavior.

- 7) Failure to acknowledge, understand, or address problems once they have been identified and brought to trainee's attention or problematic behavior that requires repeated efforts by staff or Training Council leadership to address.
- 8) Inability to control personal stress and/or excessive emotional reactions which interfere with professional functioning.
- 9) Observed problems appear, in the view of the Training Council, to be beyond remediation by further academic/didactic training.
- 10) The problem is noted in more than one area of professional functioning or by more than one faculty supervisor.
- 11) A disproportionate amount of attention is required by training personnel in an attempt to address the problematic behavior(s).
- 12) The trainee has not been adequately meeting other significant programmatic expectations (e.g., not attending mandatory training, not carrying the expected caseload, has not been timely in arriving to rotation sites, etc.).

V. Procedures for Responding to Problematic Performance: In the context of problematic trainee performance, the Training Council is not an adjudicatory body. Rather, the Training Council and Training Director serve in an advisory capacity and are responsible for making recommendations to the Chief of Psychology or designee. The structure of supervision, feedback, and supervisory consultation with the Training Council is designed to provide both trainees and supervisors with a structure for constructively reviewing progress and providing recommendations and actions to assist trainees in successfully meeting training requirements and competency benchmarks.

The Training Council actively tracks the progress and growth of all trainees during, and at the conclusion, of their rotations (or special emphasis areas, in the case of Postdoctoral Residents). Tracking or monitoring trainee performance may occur through informal and/or formal processes and through any means of communication (such as phone, email, or written messages).

The evaluation forms for both Interns and Residents (Trainee Evaluation Form) describe the evaluative meaning of each rank as:

- 1 – Requires continued supervision/focused training to attain minimal achievement.*
- 2 – Meets minimum level of developmental achievement.*
- 3 – Clearly meets developmental level of achievement.*
- 4 – Exceeds developmental level of achievement.*

On the Trainee Evaluation Form, a score of 1 on any item must be promptly brought to the attention of the Training Council for assistance or for possible remediation. At the final rating period, while meeting minimal competence, a 2 represents an area of recommended continued learning.

- A. **Identification & Notification to Training Leadership:** Any trainee behavior perceived as potentially problematic, and that does not appear to be resolvable by the usual supervisory support and intervention, should be brought to the attention of the Training Director or designee.
- B. **Notification to Intern Graduate Programs:** The Training Director or designee may at any time (regardless of what level of review, monitoring, or intervention is being conducted) report and/or consult with the Director of Training (or designee) at the intern's graduate program.
- C. **Investigation and initial Notice of Review:** Should the Training Director or designee determine something more than investigation or watchful monitoring may be necessary, they will gather information from supervisors, and any other relevant sources, regarding the nature of the problem(s).
 1. If it appears further investigation is warranted, per the judgment of the Training Director or designee, they will initiate a discussion with the trainee, verbally inform them that a review of their performance is underway, and follow this with a written *Notice of Review*.

Special note: It is the role of the Psychology Training Leadership and Training Council to routinely and consistently review and deliberate regarding the progress of all psychology trainees in their

training programs throughout the entirety of the training year. Once a trainee has received a Notice of Review, their progress may be reviewed and deliberated at any point during the remainder of the year without re-initiation of a Notice of Review.

2. The trainee and preceptor will be invited to provide their own information and perspective of the problem, including any actions for resolution already in place or scheduled for implementation. The trainee may provide this information in a written summary to be presented at the Training Council review meeting, or they and their preceptor may attend the Training Council review meeting in-person to share this information.

While trainees under review are welcome to provide their own information, perspective, and ideas related to how they might best resolve performance problems, the determination of “problematic” performance is a matter of professional judgment and considered by consensus of the Training Council members. Deliberation of strategies for resolution will be conducted without the trainee present unless the Training Council members are compelled to do so by a majority agreement.

- D. Training Council Review & Determination: Once information is gathered from the trainee and relevant supervisors and faculty the Training Director or designee(s) will present the issue to the Training Council at the next scheduled monthly meeting*. If the trainee and/or preceptor have elected to attend, they will then be invited into the Council meeting to provide additional information and perspective. The attending Training Council members will then meet without the presence of the trainee to review the information. The present members will determine whether the performance or behavior problems are considered “problematic” by majority vote. ***It should be noted that the designation of “problematic” implies the possibility of being discontinued from the training program.***

*A special session of Training Council may be called together in cases where there is some urgency of concern, or when it is viewed too much time would elapse before the next scheduled meeting without calling a special session.

- E. Determinations Other Than “Problematic”: If the Training Council determines the behaviors/issues not to be “problematic,” they will notify the trainee, preceptor, and involved supervisors of their review and findings.
 - a. The Training Council may elect to take no further action (most likely in cases where the trainee/preceptor have already identified clear and reasonable strategies being implemented to resolve the performance problems and where there has been some demonstration of initial progress).
 - b. The Training Council may elect to make general recommendations for training to help the trainee make additional progress in specific competency areas, if deemed appropriate.
 - c. The Training Council may elect to informally monitor the trainee’s progress and performance through the next evaluation cycle. Examples of informal monitoring might include, but are not limited to, setting up a follow-up meeting with the Training Director, or designee, in the following weeks to learn how the trainee perceives their progress, by consulting directly with supervisors, or by continued review of the Trainee Evaluation Form.
- F. Determinations of “Problematic” Performance and Resolution Planning: If the Training Council determines the presented performance issues are “problematic” by majority vote of present members, they will then deliberate and vote to take either of the following actions:
 1. **Skills Development Plan**: The Training Council will make recommendations for the trainee to gain additional knowledge, training, or skills practice in a specific performance area, and require monitoring and follow-up reporting to the Training Council within a specified time frame.

2. Implementation of a *Formal Remediation Plan*: As indicated above, the implementation of a *Remediation Plan* requires that the trainee demonstrate successful completion of the plan and resolution of the problematic behavior in order to be considered as successfully completing the training program.

Special note: Once a trainee has been notified of concerns regarding problematic behavior or placed on a Skills Development Plan, the Training Council will continue to monitor their progress throughout the course of their training by informal or formal review. This is done in order ensure that previously problematic behaviors have not returned or evolved into other problematic behaviors. Once a trainee has been placed on a Skills Development Plan, even if the concerns appear initially resolved, the Training Council may elect at any time to implement a Formal Remediation Plan should problematic behaviors arise again. As noted above, this will not require re-initiation of a Notice of Review. The trainee, however, will be notified by the Training Director or designee of the specific concerns and is welcome to offer any information or explanations of behavioral problems related to the concerns being presented. This information will be considered in the development of the *Formal Remediation Plan*.

- i. The *Formal Remediation Plan* will be a written document that includes the following components:
 - (1) A description of the problematic performance issues.
 - (2) Specific recommendations for rectifying the problems and increasing satisfactory competence.
 - (3) A time frame for the performance period during which the problem is expected to be addressed, changed, or improved.
 - (4) Procedures for the trainee and supervisors to assess and report to the Training Council whether the problem has been appropriately rectified.
- ii. The recommendations in the *Formal Remediation Plan* may include, but are not limited to:
 - (1) Increased supervision, either with same or other supervisors.
 - (2) Change in format, emphasis, and/or focus of supervision.
 - (3) A recommendation that personal therapy is undertaken at the trainee's expense specific to the noted behavioral problems.
 - (4) Reduction in trainee's clinical duties or recommendation for leave of absence.
- iii. In the case of Psychology Interns, where formal remediation is considered necessary: (1) The Training Council will notify the affiliated academic training program of the intern and alert them to the identified problem and collaborate with that program to the extent deemed appropriate by the Training Council, and (2) Supervisory staff will have clear dialogue with the Intern about what they can or cannot provide in the way of professional references for job or postdoctoral positions to which the Intern may apply during the training year.
- iv. In the case of Psychology Residents, where formal remediation is considered necessary: The Training Council must consider the level of training of Residents and their ethical obligation to evaluate Residents as having successfully completed postdoctoral training with skills and behaviors sufficient for independent practice. Because Residents are seeking job placement during their training the Training Council will recommend (1) that residency supervisors have a clear dialogue with the Resident about what they can or cannot provide in the way of professional references for job placement, and (2) the Training Council may vote to submit a formal Letter of Concern into the Resident's training file, which will be removed only upon successful completion of the *Remediation Plan* and successful completion of all other areas of training competency.

It should be noted that a Letter of Concern in the Resident's file may have a potentially negative impact upon any future requests for documentation or reference to state licensing boards (e.g., the Supervisor's Attestation Form for the Missouri State Committee of Psychologists-SCOP).

- v. Should the Training Council find the nature of the problem to be of such severity that continued efforts in training would potentially compromise the care of Veterans, the well-being of other staff and trainees, or the integrity of the training program itself, the Training Council may recommend to the Chief of Psychology that the trainee be terminated. As stated above, employees appointed pursuant to 38 USC 7405 may be terminated without such a review.
3. Once the Training Council has issued the *Formal Remediation Plan*, the trainee's performance and status will be reviewed within three months' time, or at the next formal evaluation (whichever comes first). The Training Council will seek information from involved supervisors as well as the trainee regarding status and progress. Following review of progress and the input of those involved, the Training Council will then determine by a majority vote whether the trainee is viewed to have successfully resolved the *Formal Remediation Plan*, whether a new *Remediation Plan* and further monitoring should be conducted, or whether actions toward failure of training or termination should be initiated.

VI. Failure to Correct Problems: If it has been determined that there has been a failure to correct the problem(s) in keeping with the terms of a *Formal Remediation Plan* the Training Council will conduct a formal review and notify the trainee as well as the preceptor, in writing, of failure to meet the conditions for satisfying the terms of the appropriate notice.

When a combination of interventions does not correct the problematic performance within a reasonable amount of time (as defined in *Formal Remediation Plan*), or when a trainee appears unwilling or unable to alter the identified problem at any point during the training year, the Training Council may elect to take further formal action which may include, but is not limited to:

- 1) Suspension of the trainee for a limited time from engaging in certain professional activities until there is evidence that the identified problem has been rectified. Suspensions beyond the specified period of time may result in termination or failure to graduate the program.
- 2) Depending on the gravity of the identified problem, the Training Council may inform the trainee and preceptor that the trainee will not successfully complete the internship or residency if the Training Council cannot establish that sufficient competency has been achieved.
- 3) If by the end of the training year, the trainee has not successfully completed the training requirements, the Training Council may recommend that Psychology Interns not graduate from their academic programs or that Psychology Residents not be recommended or referred for positions of independent practice or licensing.
 - a. Intern trainees will be informed in writing that they have not successfully completed the internship. The academic program of intern trainees will be notified of such.
 - b. Resident trainees will be informed in writing that they have not successfully completed postdoctoral training/residency. They will be provided a copy of the Letter of Concern placed in their training file and reminded of the implications with respect to reference requests from state licensing boards and future employers.
- 4) In rare cases, when the opinion of the Training Council is that the performance or behavior of a trainee may compromise the care of clients or colleagues, or where their level of performance is so deficient that they cannot ethically be recommended for independent practice, the Training Council will recommend immediate dismissal from the training program. Terminations are initiated at the discretion of the Chief of Psychology as outlined in existing regulations for "Involuntary Separation of Employees" under 38 USC 7405(a)(1)(A). This policy specifies:

- a. “In effecting voluntary separations of employees serving under 38 U.S.C 7405(a)(1)(A), the procedural requirements prescribed for separations, such as reviews by Professional Standards Boards or Disciplinary Boards, do not apply.”
- b. “Although not required, employees should, where feasible, be given such advance notice of separation as determined appropriate by the approving official.”
- c. “The employee will not be entitled to a review of the involuntary separation.”
- d. “The provisions of the VHA Handbook 1100.18 relating to reporting to State licensing boards and licensing monitoring entities, must be followed in all instances in which an employee is separated whose standards of clinical practice are in question.”

Note that there will be no discrimination because of race, color, religion, national origin, sex or sexual orientation, lawful political affiliation, membership or non-membership in a labor organization, marital status, non-disqualifying disability, age, or other irrelevant factors in any separation or other action under this part.

All of the above steps/actions will be appropriately documented and implemented in ways that are consistent with the process as outlined above, including the opportunity for trainees to initiate grievance proceedings in response to the Training Council’s decisions. Please refer to the policy on grievances below.

Special Note: Problematic behaviors identified in the last month of the training year, whether similar to those previously addressed or not, may still result in a trainee being recommended for remediation if the Training Council believes they are significantly problematic. Should identification of problems occur in a time frame that does not allow a reasonable amount of time to address or remediate behaviors, or for the Training Council to properly follow the typical course of Notice of Review and corrective planning, the Training Council will recommend the trainee not complete the program. For interns, this means their graduate program will be notified that our program will discharge as “incomplete” and recommend the graduate program take necessary steps for the intern’s remediation. For residents, this means they will not successfully complete the program and their file will be listed as such.

VII. Training Program Grievance Procedures: Grievances by trainees may address issues related to training evaluation, performance problems, as well as grievances against a member of the training faculty or other staff or employees of the VA St. Louis Health Care System.

When encountering problems with supervisors or other staff of the medical center, it is often most appropriate for the student to address the problems directly with the other individuals involved. This can usually be handled through assertive communication during supervision. The student’s preceptor is a valuable resource for addressing problems that cannot be resolved at the level of the student-supervisor or student-staff member. Assisting the student in solving such problems is a direct obligation of the preceptor. Our experience has been that students often find the preceptor to be a good sounding-board when considering how to pursue a grievance.

The Training Director and Assistant Training Director(s) are also a resource for both students and staff for addressing problems that cannot be resolved at the student-supervisor or student-preceptor levels. The role of the Training Director and Assistant Training Director(s) is to facilitate problem-solving among the individuals involved, although it is important to note that neither the Training Director nor the Assistant Training Director(s) have supervisory authority over professional staff. Nonetheless, the Training Director and Assistant Training Director(s) can be extremely valuable in resolving student-staff conflicts because of the strong commitment of our staff to the training program. The Training Director and Assistant Training Director(s) often refer problems presented by trainees to the Training Council for consultation and advice.

When a student has a grievance against a member of the training program staff or other medical center staff, he or she has two parallel paths that can be followed to seek redress. The first path is through the training program’s grievance process. The second path is through the medical center’s grievance process for employees. Grievances can be addressed through either or both of these paths. The training program generally suggests that the student first

employs the training program grievance process. The training program process tends to be more informal and collegial. Often the grievance process can be a learning experience for the student as well as offering the opportunity for redressing the grievance. Ultimately, however, this is the student's decision to make. This memorandum will predominantly focus on the training program's grievance process although reference will be made to the medical center's process as well.

Regarding Performance Improvement and Remediation Procedures

Trainees who receive a *Remediation Plan*, or who otherwise disagree with any Training Council decision regarding their status in the program, are entitled to challenge the Council's actions by initiating a grievance procedure. Within 10 working days of receipt of the Training Council's notice or other decision, the trainee must inform the Training Director or Assistant Director in writing that he/she disagrees with the Council's action and to provide the Training Director or Assistant Training Director with information as to why the trainee believes the Training Council's action is unwarranted. **Failure to provide such information will constitute an irrevocable withdrawal of the challenge.** Following receipt of the trainee's grievance, the following actions will be taken:

- A. Upon receipt of the written notice of grievance, the Training Director and Assistant Training Director will convene a Review Panel consisting of two staff members selected by the Training Director and two staff members selected by the trainee. The trainee retains the right to hear all allegations and the opportunity to dispute them or explain his or her behavior.
- B. The Review Panel's decisions will be made by majority vote. Within 10 days of completion of the review hearing, the Review Panel will prepare a report documenting the reasons for its decision and recommendations and will provide the report to the trainee and the Training Council.
- C. Once the Review Panel has submitted its report, the trainee or the Training Council has 10 working days within which to seek a further review of the grievance and Review Panel report by submitting a written request to the Chief of Psychology, or designee. The request must contain brief explanations of the grievance, Review Panel report, and the desired settlement which is sought, and it must also specify which policies, rules, or regulations are considered to have been violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied in previous steps in the process.

The Chief of Psychology or designee will then conduct a review of all documents submitted and render a written decision within 15 working days of receipt of the Review Panel's report, and within 10 working days of receipt of a request for further review if such request was submitted. The Chief of Psychology, or designee, may either accept the Review Panel's action, or reject the Review Panel's action and provide an alternative. The decisions of the Chief of Psychology are final. The decision to terminate a traineeship will involve consultation and concurrence of the ACOS of Mental Health, input from Human Resource Management, and notification to the local facility Designated Education Officer (ACOS of Research & Development/Education).

- D. Once a final and binding decision has been made, the trainee will be informed in writing of the actions taken. If this involves a predoctoral Intern, the sponsoring university will also be informed in writing.

VIII. Medical Center Grievance Process for Employees

The medical center generally recommends that employees who have grievances against other staff first utilize the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process. This is a totally voluntary program and the parties involved in this process do not need to accept any recommendation that emerge from this process. A high percentage of cases brought before the ADR counselor are resolved at the mutual satisfaction of both parties. Contact information about ADR can be found on bulletin boards throughout the medical center or through Human Resources.

Other mechanisms for addressing grievances are described in the Employee Handbook you received during your initial meeting with Human Resources during orientation week at the beginning of the year. Additional copies of the Employee Handbook are available through Human Resources and may be found online through the VA's Intranet.

Trainees should also be aware that the medical center has policies governing the right of employees to be free of harassment, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Counseling for matters of potential discrimination, and the right to reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities. These Medical Center Memorandums (MCMs) are

all available through either the Information section of VISTA or the medical center's intranet website, which can be accessed from most workstations in the medical center.

IX. Documentation and Storage of Complaints/Grievances: The psychology training program will document and store complaints and grievances in accordance with the most current *Standards of Accreditation* specified by the APA Commission on Accreditation. The psychology training program is responsible for keeping information and records of all formal complaints and grievances, of which it is aware, filed against the program and/or against individuals associated with the program since its last accreditation site visit. These records will be reviewed by the Commission on Accreditation (CoA) as part of its periodic review of programs. The CoA expects this program to keep all materials pertaining to each of the complaints/grievances filed against it during the aforementioned time period.

Grievances are documented in the training program through completion of the Complaint/Grievance Form. This may be filled out directly by a trainee, their preceptor, a rotation supervisor, or the Training Director or Assistant Training Director (see attached). This form provides space to describe the nature of the complaint and parties involved, as well as administrative area for the Training Director, Assistant Training Director, or Training Council members to include additional information regarding what actions were taken, what administrative level was involved in resolution, and what actions, if any, were taken in order to satisfactorily resolve the grievance.

Storage of the Complaint/Grievance Forms as well as a general log of incidents, if kept, will be stored in a secured and locked location in the Mental Health administrative offices file cabinets. These cabinets are limited in access to the Mental Health service administrators and the Training Director and Assistant Training Director.

The training program may also keep a separate log of these incidents, without listing the names of the parties involved, which summarizes the date of complaints, nature of grievance, and summary of actions and resolution. The training program may include this log of complaints or grievance in its self-study document to share with APA site visit teams. The training program may also reference, as part of problematic performance or grievance documentation, files such as Reports of Contact which may have been requested by Psychology or Mental Health executive leadership in those rare cases where negative conduct or performance problems have been elevated to their attention. The documentation of Psychology or Mental Health leadership is secured in accordance with VA policy and is kept within the Mental Health administrative files. In both cases, APA accreditation site visitors reserve the right to view the full record of program materials on any or all of the filed complaints/grievances considered to impact or affect trainees.

Lauren Mensie, Ph.D. – Training Director
VA St. Louis Health Care System – Psychology Training Council
Predoctoral and Postdoctoral Training Programs
v.2021

Attachment 2: COVID-19 Materials

VA St. Louis Health Care System Psychology Training Program **Impact of COVID-19 on Psychology Training**

The Psychology Training Program strives to provide detailed and accurate information about training during the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, all trainees successfully transitioned to providing clinical care and training remotely. In April 2021, trainees returned to campus along with staff. Trainees continue to provide patient care and engage in training activities (i.e., didactics and supervision) via virtual platforms, as well as in person when clinical needs arise and COVID-19 safety procedures are followed. We continue to plan for the full range of training contingencies in order to provide the best patient care and training that we can. We will update our public materials as we know more about what to expect for the upcoming training year.

- The VA St. Louis campuses have strict restrictions on patients or other members of the public visiting. All employees and visitors must wear a mask in all public areas on campus as part of our universal masking policy. All employees and visitors complete a health screening prior to being admitted to campus.
- Trainee orientation will include a discussion of COVID-19 including information about how health and safety are maintained at VA St. Louis.
- For the 2023-2024 training year, we expect that there will be a mix of in-person and virtual work based on patient care, training needs, federal requirements, and APA-accreditation standards.
- Telesupervision is permitted by OAA during national emergencies such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. Psychology trainees should expect routine supervisory observation using in-person or telehealth modalities, as well as co-treatment with supervisors and other licensed mental health staff.
- All didactics and seminars will be offered in person if proper social distancing and universal masking procedures are maintained. Didactics and seminars will also have the capability for virtual learning to ensure optimal flexibility.

**MANAGEMENT OF ACTIVITIES OF TRAINEES AND STUDENTS DURING COVID-19
PANDEMIC STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE
SOP COVID-19 20007**

VA St. Louis Health Care System St. Louis, MO 63106
Signatory Authority: Incident Commander
Responsible Owner: ACOS Health Professions Education Service
Service Line(s): Health Professions Education Service
Effective Date: March 27, 2020
Recertification Date: March 30, 2025

1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY

- a. The purpose of this standard operating procedure (SOP) is to establish procedures on management of activities of trainees and students during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This SOP must be followed by all allied health profession trainees and students involved patient care activities.
- b. This SOP sets forth mandatory procedures and processes to ensure compliance with guidance from the VA St. Louis Health Care System (VA STLHCS) Health Professions Education Service.

2. PROCEDURES

- a. Patient Care Activities. No students or trainees from any health or allied health profession should be directly involved in care for COVID-19 patients or patients suspected of having COVID-19. Interactions with these patients may be used when appropriate.

b. Exposure Risk.

- (1) Programs and services may use their judgment in determining appropriate clinical or scholarly activities for allied health profession students and trainees and on. Programs are encouraged to provide meaningful academic activities for trainees rotating at VASTLHCS.
- (2) Site directors and service chiefs should remain in close communication with their affiliate partners regarding restrictions on allied health profession student/trainee activities and any alternative educational plans.

c. Screening and Treatment.

- (1) Allied health profession students and trainees who display symptoms of flu-like Allied health professions trainees employed by VA STLHCS where VA STLHCS is their primary affiliation should report to their own doctor or to Employee Health.
- (2) All allied health profession students/trainees should report any COVID-19 illness or exposure within 14 days of rotating at VA STLHCS to Employee Health at 314-652-4100 ext. 5-4393.

d. Educational Experience.

(1) Programs and services may use their judgment in determining appropriate clinical or scholarly activities for allied health profession students/trainees and are encouraged to provide meaningful academic activities for trainees rotating at VASTLHCS.

(2) Site directors and service chiefs should remain in close communication with their affiliate partners regarding restrictions on allied health profession student/trainee activities and any alternative educational plans.

(3) These limitations may affect the ability of trainees and students to complete required clinical rotations for their educational programs. Allied health profession trainees and students should contact their educational institutions to discuss these issues.

e. Inquiries.

(1) If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the ACOS Health Professions Education Service. Please refer any questions or concerns from allied health profession trainees, students, and affiliate institutions to the Health Professions Education Service.

3. ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Staff. Adhere to and maintain compliance.

b. Infectious Disease. Maintain and sustain most current standards for compliance.

4. DEFINITIONS. None

5. REFERENCES. None

6. REVIEW

As guidelines, best practices, governing documents, and health care accreditation body mandate changes occur or any regulatory requirement for more frequent review. If applicable, cite the location where the review is documented.

7. RECERTIFICATION

This SOP is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of March 2025 5 years from effective date. In the event of contradiction with national policy, the national policy supersedes and controls.

8. SIGNATORY AUTHORITY

STL COVID-19
PATRICIA F. MCKELVY

Acting ACOS Health Professions Education Service
Date Approved: March 19, 2020

STL COVID-19 Incident Commander

Date Approved: March 19, 2020

NOTE: The signature remains valid until rescinded by an appropriate administrative action.

DISTRIBUTION: Emailed All Employees and STL COVID-19 Planning Group on March 27, 2020 SOPs for COVID-19 are available at:

<https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhastl/SiteDirectory/EmergencyMgmt/STL%20EM%20Coronavirus%20%20COVID19%20Site/Home.aspx>.